APRIL 1955

COMMENTARY

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Paul Pickrel — David de Sola Pool — Pearl Kazin

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COMMENTARY

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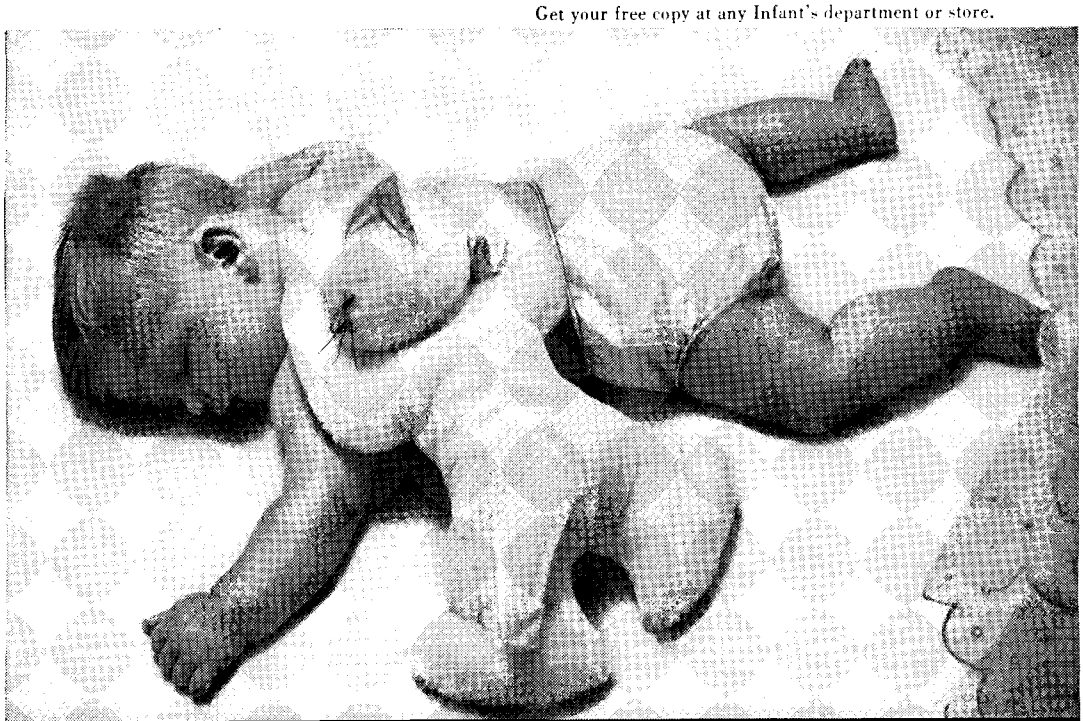

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

Now That We Have a Foreign Policy *Hal Lavine*

At least, writes Hal Lavine, our administration is no longer so afflicted by cross-purposes and divided counsel that concerned citizens can ask, as they used to, whether we have any foreign policy at all. Mr. Lavine discusses our recently enunciated policy.

Toynbee and the Jews *Franz Borkenau*

The famous historian's anti-Judaism (not anti-Semitism) is analyzed by another eminent historian, who demonstrates how little Toynbee understands either of the history or the nature of the Jewish people. In his desire to be fair, Dr. Borkenau accepts Toynbee's own terms, and shows that even these refute his diagnosis of the "Jewish problem."

The Disease of Totalitarianism *Robert Langbaum*

In March 1953, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences held a conference on "totalitarianism" the results of which now appear in book form. The main problem dealt with was whether totalitarianism was a disease endemic to modern society and hence historically unique. Mr. Langbaum reports the different answers given, their agreement and disagreement.

Is There a Red Hysteria? *Nathan Glazer*

A report, by a leading young sociologist and frequent contributor, on Samuel Stouffer's *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties,* a major study of the attitudes of average American citizens and selected community leaders sponsored by the Fund for the Republic.

The Streets of Brownsville *Arthur Granit*

A vivid picture of a group of youths in this fabled district of Brooklyn during the depression, and of life on their block. A first story by a young writer.

The Future of American Jewish Philanthropy *Hal Lehrman*

The last few years have seen a decrease in the amount of money collected by the great central community drives, and a burgeoning of fund-raising projects of all kinds outside their scope, as well as increased Jewish participation in general philanthropy. What does this development hold in store? Competitive anarchy, as some fear? Or a new balance of "local," "national," and "overseas" interests that better fits today's situation? A sequel to the author's "North Africa's Dilemma for American Jewry."

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COMMENTARY

WHY WE MUST DEFEND FORMOSA

An Alternative China to Mao's Terror State

G. F. HUDSON

THE treaty of defensive alliance which the United States has concluded with the government of the Republic of China in Taipeh means that for an indefinite time to come—except in the event of a Chinese Communist victory in war against America—what is called Nationalist China will be enabled to survive with American support in the island of Formosa.

The policy to which the United States is now formally committed has both strategic and political implications: inevitably it has been the former on which public attention in the West has been focused, and there has been relatively little speculation on the future of the Chinese Nationalist regime under the conditions which have been laid down by the treaty. But complex and difficult political problems are involved, particularly because the clarification of American policy, while providing a more definite assurance of security than Formosa has hitherto received, has at the same time gone far to discourage the hopes of early return to the mainland, on which Chinese Nationalist morale has up to now been nourished.

The assignment of Formosa to the United States, or even to the free world as a whole, tends to assist the Chinese Communist propaganda line that Formosa has been seized by American imperialism for the sake of purely American interests. This propaganda spoke of Formosa being "occupied" by Americans even before American Air Force units moved in there under the recent agreement: the line is to make the most of the American presence on a piece of Chinese territory and to represent the "traitorous Chiang Kai-shek clique" as mere puppets of foreign invaders. The real American purpose is, on the other hand, to support a sovereign Chinese administration in a detached Chinese province and preserve it against a revolutionary Communist regime which has made war on the United States

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PLAIN sense (not to speak of elementary conscience) on the Formosa situation is surprisingly hard to come by at a time when confusion, illusion, and sheer panic seem to possess so many, particularly among our "leading opinion-molders." It is plain sense, and a recognition of the hard and simple realities of fact (and commitment) that G. F. HUDSON endeavors to give us in this, his second article, on the defense of Formosa. The first, entitled "The Basis for Our Defense of Formosa," appeared in our March number. Mr. Hudson, a steady contributor to COMMENTARY (this is the third successive month in which he appears in its pages), is an eminent specialist in Far Eastern affairs, and is well on the way to becoming an equally eminent one on the East-West conflict in general. Born in England in 1903, he studied in Japan and has written several books on the Far East. Today he is director of the newly founded center for Far Eastern Studies of St. Anthony's College in Oxford.

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(and other members of the United Nations) and is supplied and protected by the Soviet Union. President Eisenhower, in his message to Congress on the defense of Formosa, clearly stated this aim by putting succor to a "brave ally" in the forefront of his appeal.

It is not simply a question of American forces defending a piece of American territory, or an area under American jurisdiction, as if it were Hawaii or Okinawa. Formosa cannot hope to resist the power of the Communist bloc without American support, but neither can America expect to keep it out of Communist hands without the positive cooperation of the Chinese armed forces and people in the island: if these were for any reason to pass over to the other side, an entirely new situation would arise which has not so far been envisaged in the making of policy. What exists at present is an alliance, and as in all alliances, the political foundation must be maintained intact or the superstructure of defense arrangements built on it will fall to the ground.

THAT something has been saved from the shipwreck of China should be a matter for congratulation to all who recognize the danger of totalitarian Communism in Asia, no matter how low a view is taken of the past record of the Kuomintang. As the most numerous nation in the world, with the natural resources and human potential to become within a short time an industrial and military power of a rank appropriate to their population, the Chinese present the most significant question mark of our age. What kind of power are they to be in the world of the future? After a long period of confusion, backwardness, and adversity in which their traditional pride was humbled in the dust, it was to be anticipated in any case that their late arrival among the great powers would be marked by excesses of self-assertion and resentment over real or fancied grievances. But up to 1949 it could still be hoped that their international development would be in friendly relations with the West, and their internal political evolution in the direction of liberal and humane ideals, even if it were not immediately a wholly democratic one.

The subjection of China to a Communist regime, signifying the conversion of a fifth of the world's population to a creed of intolerance and violence, was therefore a catastrophe of the first magnitude. There are many in the West, particularly in Europe, who still try to minimize the disaster that has occurred and set their hopes on some kind of magical softening influence which Western diplomats and businessmen could exert on the Marxist-Leninist heart if only all Western governments would renounce all remaining ties with Chinese anti-Communists and enter into unreservedly "friendly" relations with the new regime. For those, on the other hand, who do not expect to gather figs from thistles, the best that can be done in a very grim situation is to keep alive on a fragment of Chinese territory some un-brainwashed residue of that China which was the ally of the Western democracies in the war against Japan only a decade ago.

For the whole point of a totalitarian conquest, which distinguishes it from a mere ordinary change of government or shift of policy, is its all-engulfing character: a nation, once captured, is subjected—and particularly the young—to a comprehensive indoctrination and conditioning which leaves no opposition except a voiceless and unorganized quantity of dissent within the national frontiers, and a number of scattered refugees and exiles in the territories of other states. When this situation has been brought about, the totalitarian government can claim that its regime is identical with the nation and that any emigrés who try to speak to the people from abroad are mere agents of foreign powers, uprooted and isolated from their own country. It is different, however, if an opposition can hold out in some part of the national territory where it can maintain an independent organized administration and a genuinely national political and cultural life. Such a regime, even if it has no immediate prospect of overthrowing its totalitarian rival, is a permanent challenge to

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the latter, depriving it of that completeness of domination at which it aims and providing always an alternative center of political power and attraction.

The value of such a center of opposition from the point of view of those who feel threatened by a totalitarian power does not depend on the opposition leadership being an embodiment of all human virtues. In a situation of totalitarian aggressiveness any opposition is of value, provided it has a substantial following and a real will to resist. But naturally, the better the political quality of the opposition, the more likely it will be to make an effective appeal to the subjects of the rival regime, and the fewer doubts foreign governments need feel in giving it support.

With regard to the authority now ruling Formosa, it cannot be denied that it suffers from much that is disreputable in its past record, and that the defeats which drove it from the mainland were in large measure due to its failure to retain the confidence of wide sections of the Chinese people in the period following the end of the Pacific war. Yet, even on the past record, it must be pointed out that the defects of the Kuomintang regime have been systematically magnified for political reasons by Western governments which needed either a scapegoat for their own muddles of postwar policy or an excuse for hasty recognition of the People's Republic.

The American *White Paper* of 1949 was concerned to demonstrate that the American government from 1944 onwards had done everything possible, short of actual military intervention, to uphold the Chinese National government against the Communists, but was frustrated by the unreasonableness and incompetence of those whom it was trying to help—a contention which does not account for the effects of the Marshall mission or the delays and deficiencies of American military aid to the National government. Similarly, British officialdom, having rushed into recognition of Communist China without America and having achieved nothing thereby but complications and embarrassment, has been anxious to convince everybody that at any rate it had been quite right to have nothing more to do with the "busted war lord" on Formosa.

But if allowance is made for the motives of all this official denigration, and the facts of the record are fairly considered in relation to the Chinese historical background, the story of the Kuomintang is by no means the disgraceful one that it is commonly thought to be, even by many of those who believe that Formosa must somehow be kept from falling into Communist hands. In the decade 1927-37, before the Japanese invasion interrupted their attempt to unify and modernize China, the Kuomintang leaders, including several who are now in Formosa, won the esteem of a number of responsible foreign observers who had close contact with them and understood their difficulties. Inheriting a country with virtually no modern industry not owned by foreigners, with an anarchic military system, and no regular professional civil service on which to build a modern state, they had a task which even with twenty years of external peace would have taxed their abilities to the utmost.

The Japanese invasion and eight years of devastating war destroyed the beginnings of new growth and, by isolating the government in the still "feudal" interior of the country, eliminated the more liberal and progressive elements in its composition, while the currency inflation, which was an almost inevitable concomitant of China's struggle, revived and intensified the old habits of official corruption. Even so, and with all the apathy and war-weariness Americans found in China by 1944, the story of China's eight-year resistance to Japan is a glorious one, and it is not one that the Communists can claim as their own, for the leadership remained throughout with the National government, and the main brunt of military operations was always borne by the nationalist forces.

If Chiang Kai-shek and his colleagues had been nothing but the selfish reactionaries

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that they are now so often represented as having been, it would have been easy enough for them to have accepted one of the attractive peace offers the Japanese kept on dangling in front of them. It was because they would accept nothing short of complete sovereign independence for China that they continued a struggle which often seemed a lost cause. After the war, when the Communists were still poorly equipped, the National government could probably have regained control of all China that mattered if the Soviet Union had carried out the terms of the Sino-Soviet treaty of August 1945 (which would have put the Nationalists in effective control of Manchuria and prevented the Japanese arms dumps there from falling into Communist hands), and if the American government had afforded moral and material support instead of the fatuous Marshall mediation.

All that, however, belongs to the past and cannot now be altered: it is necessary to refer to it only because it is still widely assumed that there is nothing in the Kuomintang political tradition that can ever again appeal to the people of China or that is capable of inspiring a new generation of political leaders. In fact, the defeat of the Nationalists in the civil war after the shattering of the Chinese state and society by the Japanese invasion no more proves the worthlessness of the former regime than Hitler's achievement of power in Germany proved that there was never anything good or decent in the Weimar Republic.

On the other hand, it is important not to fall into the opposite excess of believing that the bulk of the people of China are longing for the return of their old rulers. However deep may be the disillusionment of the Chinese peasants and middle classes who were formerly attracted by the tactical promises of the Communists, the new regime has established a firm central control and orderly administration throughout China, which, after the long years of foreign invasion and civil war, is something that gives the present rulers an immense advantage over any agitation that can only lead to a new civil war. As also in Spain, there is a feeling that anything is better than another round of domestic fighting, that the issue has been decided, and one must put up with the consequences.

This attitude of acceptance of an accomplished fact may change in time, particularly if one of Communist China's external adventures goes wrong or if serious dissensions develop within the ruling group. But at present there is no evidence of a degree of unrest or disruption in Communist China which would justify any hope of a return of the Nationalists to the mainland in the near future. The only reasonable hope for the Nationalists must lie in a long-term policy of building in Formosa a political and social order which will continually present the example of a Chinese alternative to the system established on the mainland.

It is impossible to foresee the circumstances in which the Communist dictatorship might break up or be weakened, but if that time should come—and the experience of history indicates that it will come sooner or later to such a regime, whether in Russia or in China—it will make all the difference whether or not an organized alternative order exists in one province of China. On the other hand, there cannot be any question in the future of a simple Kuomintang reconquest of the mainland or of a restoration of the party's former "tutelage." China has at least been administratively unified by Communism, and the struggle against Communist tyranny can only be based on a principle of democratic freedom with a plurality of political parties.

There is, however, a great psychological difficulty to be overcome if the Nationalists are to pursue a long-term policy of fighting Communism by political rather than military means. The Kuomintang leaders and the troops who followed them to Formosa are exiles from their homes, even if they are still on what they regard as Chinese soil, and their morale has hitherto been sustained by the hope of an early victorious re-

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turn to the mainland; though constantly postponed, the glorious day has always been just around the corner. Formosa has been regarded as a mere temporary base, not as a country to be governed and defended as an end in itself. What will be the effect on the Nationalists from the mainland when it finally becomes clear to them that—barring some unforeseeable contingency—they are destined to stay in Formosa for an indefinite period and must make of it, not only their home, but a separate state?

THAT they will soon be compelled to renounce the myth of immediate return is implied in the very terms of the treaty by which the United States has undertaken to protect Formosa. The American commitment is confined to Formosa, the Pescadores, and any positions regarded as essential for their defense, and the Nationalists are bound not to embark on any military operations without consulting their ally. This means that they cannot just make a landing on the mainland coast, hoping to pull in the Americans as soon as they get into trouble. The pact itself and what is known of American policy preclude any idea of American support for a Nationalist offensive. If there is war on the China coast, it can only be by the act of the Communists; that indeed might open up possibilities of a major upheaval in China, but it is not an outcome that the Nationalists themselves can bring about.

If there is only a war of nerves, with desultory local fighting, during the next few months, American policy may be expected to move in the direction of the "Two Chinas" solution—a *modus vivendi* based on recognition of Communist China and Nationalist China as two separate states and leading eventually to the seating of both Peking and Taipeh government delegates in the United Nations. Such a development, even though it left the Nationalist government in Taipeh secure and independent, would be a very severe blow to its prestige and self-esteem as an authority claiming to be the sole legal government of China, located in Formosa only as a temporary retreat in a continuing struggle.

It would be extremely difficult for the Nationalists to adjust themselves to the idea of terminating the Chinese civil war—even though there has been hardly any real fighting in it since 1949—and devoting themselves to building a new miniature China in Formosa. It may be that the disappointment and sense of frustration will be too great for some of them to bear, and that there will be further internal discords and defection. Some of the malcontents may try to make their peace with the Communists, others may leave Formosa and go abroad, as Li Tsung-jen and K. C. Wu have already done. It would probably be wise to allow any soldiers who wish to go back to Communist territory to do so rather than try and hold them by force in Formosa. But there will probably be enough reliable personnel, both civil and military, to operate an independent state in Formosa, and make it work.

Much would depend on the political handling, including the forms of words used in American official statements. It must always be clearly recognized that the separation of Formosa is not a matter of nationality, that both Communist China and Nationalist are Chinese states, that the separation is due solely to the fact that all political and cultural freedom has been destroyed on the mainland by the Communist dictatorship, and that Formosa is ready to reunite with the rest of China whenever conditions of liberty are established there. Formosa will be a state in which Chinese national feeling and patriotism are cultivated, even though in practical politics a provincial Formosan outlook may become stronger as time goes on.

THE great difficulty in organizing a viable state in Formosa lies in the fact that its population now consists of two far from harmonious ingredients—the native Formosan Chinese, among whom the older generation, having grown up under Japanese rule, generally speak Japanese and one of the Fukien dialects, but do not understand standard Chinese, and the refugees from the

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mainland, including the bulk of the army, who do not have any roots in the island and have overloaded its economic capacity.

The administration of Formosa reflects this dual composition of the people, for there are two distinct authorities—the national government itself with its ministries, and the provincial government of Formosa, the territory of the province being identical with that controlled by the national government, except for Matsu and Quemoy, which theoretically belong to the province of Fukien. If the national government were to be reduced in form as well as in fact to being the administration of Formosa alone, the native Formosans would probably press for a much larger share in the governing of the island than they now have, and the existence of a large distinct "central" government apparatus run by mainlanders and only distantly concerned with the affairs of Formosa itself would become increasingly difficult to justify.

On the other hand, there is no good reason to suppose that the Formosans, if they get more political power, will wish either to secede permanently from China or rush into the arms of the People's Republic. With already a decade of Chinese school education since the end of Japanese rule, their younger generation already have much more Chinese National consciousness than the older. There is still a strong local particularism which clashes with the outlook of the refugees from the mainland, but it does not help the Communists who rule China from Peking, and the more responsive the government in Taipeh becomes to the local interests and needs of the Formosans, the more they will regard it as their own.

The question of the relations between the refugee Nationalists and the native Formosans is linked with that of political democracy in Nationalist China. If the Nationalists are to make a democratic political appeal against Communism, they must practice what they preach. On the other hand, in a country which has up to now had no tradition or experience of democracy, a government engaged in civil war against a totalitarian enemy and menaced with every kind of fifth-column subversion has to go slowly in introducing freedom of opposition.

Formosa is still in a state of siege and Communist agents are continually entering it either as spies or to foment disorder. A strong counter-espionage organization is a necessity for the survival of the regime. There are undoubtedly, however, too many features of the "police state" in Formosa today, and one of the greatest advantages of a cease-fire agreement, if it could be brought about, would be that the ensuing relaxation of tension, together with the sense of external security provided by the defense treaty with America, would permit the beginnings of a democratic political development free from the immediate stresses inherent in a war situation.

To say that it would permit such beginnings is not, of course, to say that they will in fact be initiated. That will depend on the Nationalist leadership, and if the latter entirely fails to rise to its political opportunities, nobody in the long run will be able to save it from itself. It must always be borne in mind, however, in answer to the gibe that the quarrel in China is between two parties equally authoritarian, that their principles drive them in diametrically opposite directions; the Kuomintang, although holding that a period of "tutelage" or single-party rule was necessary to unify China after the anarchy of the war-lord period, has as its proclaimed objective a system of multi-party democracy, whereas Communism, although allowing for the subordinate existence of other parties in the initial phase of its revolution, aims at absolute single-party rule as the ideal form of government.

In political theory, therefore, the Kuomintang can certainly claim to stand for democracy in the Western sense as against the Communists, but the sooner it gives a convincing demonstration of its purpose, the better it will be able to make an appeal to those numerous Chinese who once foolishly favored the Communists as the party of liberty and have now learnt what Communist promises really mean.

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IMPORTANT as it is that Formosa should be as democratic as possible, it is even more important that it should enjoy full independence as a sovereign state. Chinese national pride will be rendered more sensitive by the small compass of Formosan territory and the dependence on America for supplies and defensive aid, and the surest way to bring about a disintegration of the Nationalist regime will be for the United States to intervene actively in its affairs. That will also give ground for Communist propaganda to label it scornfully a mere stooge apparatus—or, as a British Labor member of Parliament expressed it, "a government whose only function is to administer an American base."

It lies with Washington to decide by the conduct of its policy whether the Chinese Nationalists are to appear in the eyes of China and of Asia as a bunch of small boys ordered about by an American schoolmaster, or whether they can hold up their heads as a genuinely independent and respected ally of the United States. The American ambassador in Taipeh will have plenty of opportunities for discreet influence and advice, but the temptation to use the American position to impose something like a protectorate in the old colonial sense must be resisted if the Nationalist government is to retain its own self-respect and its prestige among a proud and sensitive people.

It is, nevertheless, essential that the United States should retain unimpaired the special responsibility for Formosa which it has undertaken by the treaty of alliance, and not try to internationalize it by handing it over to the United Nations. Formosa must be either a fully independent state or nothing. It is not a backward or primitive territory which requires special international supervision, and any form of United Nations trusteeship would be entirely inappropriate to it.

Efforts will probably be made in the coming months to get Formosa treated as a "ward" of the United Nations on the ground that it has no clearly defined judicial status and has become an international problem. But if the government of Formosa is not the residue of the former Republic of China preserved from Communist conquest by alliance with the United States, then it is nothing at all, and the island might as well be handed over to the Communists without more ado.

The only justifiable aim for Western policy with regard to Formosa is to maintain the existence of an alternative China, a Chinese state which, however small, is not drenched with hatred of the West, is not brainwashed into a cruel ideological fanaticism, and is not linked with the Soviet Union as a promoter of world revolution. In the island of Formosa, given a period of peace and security—and the hypothesis of a major war in the Far East in the immediate future is not here considered—the Chinese can renew and continue that promising development of a new way of life, modern and yet continuous with the traditions of the past, which had begun before the immense successive disasters of Japanese invasion and Communist domination fell upon China. To render this possible is at present all that the West can do for China, but if it is done with sincerity and resolution, we can be confident that something of enduring value will have been salvaged from the worst of shipwrecks.

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THE JEWISHNESS OF FRANZ KAFKA

Some Sources of His Particular Vision

CLEMENT GREENBERG

MUCH of the strangeness in Kafka's writing can well be attributed to his neuroses, and beyond them to a personality that remains unique when all the neuroses have been "explained" away. But beyond both personality and neuroses there lie more general antecedents and causes. There was the literary tradition of the language, German, in which he wrote. There was the city of Prague, in which he was born and lived most of his life. There was the Jewry of that city, and its past, and the larger past of all Central and East European Jewry. Kafka carried with him a kind of "racial" memory of that past. Though he was an emancipated Jew, he was still its product and after-effect.

And though Western culture was the only culture he commanded, he seems not to have felt altogether at home in it. On the other hand, his insights into certain large if subtle truths of the Jewish past and its culture were founded on relatively little direct knowledge of either. Such anomalies echo through Kafka's writing and may account for things in it that must otherwise seem arbitrary and opaque.

TIME moves differently for Kafka than for any other story-teller who has used a modern European language. The tension is that of existence in time, certainly, but it is tension towards beginnings and towards the presence of the present rather than towards outcomes or eventualities. Yet, though Kafka's protagonist lives in fear of these, somehow everything has already been settled, the crucial decisions have already been made. If doom and resolution approach without ever quite arriving, it is because they are already and always have been present. Actual life only recapitulates a point made somewhere else.

At the same time, the ultimate and the immediate, the exceptional and the everyday, the crucial and the incidental, intersect everywhere and at every moment. Hence everything that happens exerts equal pressure and requires, in the telling, equal emphasis. But it is not, on the face of it, exaltation which thus levels everything upward. The vision that produces the words of Kafka's fiction tries to fix most literally, most anxiously, everything that happens to be the case. (Fortunately, most of physical reality is not the "case"; otherwise it is unlikely that Kafka would ever have gotten beyond the description of his face in the mirror.) The prosaic may be heightened, but it is not deprived of the quality of being prosaic. What exaltation, or rather eloquence, there is in Kafka is ironical and comes at the point where the facts of the case invite a summing up that must, inevitably, be inadequate to them.

Kafka seems to write with the aim of resolving the portents given him by his sensibility. He intends to be transparent, to deflate every mystery. The result is successful art precisely because he fails. Fictive reality remains throughout what it started out as in his sensibility: a tissue of figures, likenesses, parables. Yet without the sus-

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MANY writers have been influenced by Kafka since he came into vogue, but few seem to have gotten more than a set of mannerisms from him. To get more, they would have had to grasp the innerness of Kafka's vision, and that innerness, CLEMENT GREENBERG maintains, remains inaccessible without sense of Kafka's relation to things Jewish. Mr. Greenberg has been an associate editor of COMMENTARY since its inception. He has contributed art criticism to this and other magazines, and has himself translated some things of Kafka's.

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tained effort he makes to thread the tissue and rationalize it away—that is, if he were simply satisfied with his own "poetry"—Kafka would be no more than a fantasist, a kind of Jean Paul Richter: a writer of originality, no doubt, but one who would not move us deeply.

Kafka's protagonist cannot orient himself by the objective coordinates of chronology or geography or by those, either, of history, culture, social life, religion, science, or any department or discipline whatsoever of knowledge or practical activity. He is faced with immediate data of a nakedness, of an opaque brutality in their nakedness, such as can be found elsewhere only in fairy tales and the Arabian Nights. And, as in these, the data are all touchy, subject to a magic that inheres in the texture of reality and is the agent of nothing but itself.

KAFKA'S typical hero is resigned to the settled, routinized life he is leading when the story opens. (*The Castle* is the only important exception in this respect, yet even here the settled life is what the hero strives to achieve or return to.) The action begins with the disruption of routine, whether imagined or actual, and proceeds as the hero tries to assimilate the disruption itself to routine. To this end, he constructs hypotheses that will permit him to regard the changed situation as normal, and to continue to act rationally. But these hypotheses are always refuted, as often by his own criticism as by the acts of others. For his own criticism embodies the anonymous, inscrutable yet somehow coherent trend of reality itself. And as the narrative unfolds, inside as well as outside his mind, he begins to see that it is not merely his settled way of life that is endangered by reality's trend, but his very existence or *his* very reality—which can be interpreted, too, as his rationality or sanity insofar as the attack upon himself is delivered by those agents of reality which are imbedded in his own personality.

Processes of logical thought constitute much of the "action" in Kafka's fiction, and the story is often that of the inefficacy of thought, and nothing more. No one has ever made thought so vivid as an object rather than subject. And no one has succeeded so well in capturing its processes for the ends of imaginative literature.

AS IT happens, there is a precedent for this kind of vision, but one that lies outside Western tradition. The treadmill of routine, permanence, and pattern, with scrupulous thought as its constituent and enabling principle, to which Kafka's heroes look for their safety bears many resemblances to what is envisaged in that all-important department of post-Biblical Judaism called *Halachah*. Halachah is the rational derivation—and derivation upon derivation—and application of Jewish religious law on the basis of the precepts found in the Pentateuch. Law, or Torah, extended and elaborated by means of Halachah, inside and outside the Talmud, sanctifies as much as possible of human existence by fixing it in routines whose observance pleases God. Life is consecrated by being subjected to repetition.

The assumption, as I see it, upon which Halachah proceeds as it legislates and routinizes is that history stopped with the extinction of an independent Jewish state in Palestine and will not start up again until the Messiah comes to restore it. Meanwhile Jewish existence is to be kept in hand, kept sacred and safe and Jewish, by being rendered humdrum, thoroughly prosaic, and historically immobile within the "fence"—the "Chinese wall"—of the Law. Such history as persists is Gentile history, profane, meaningless in its novelty, at best an indifferent matter to the Jew, at worst a threat to his physical person and his routine.

Though Gentile history has finally brought Kafka emancipation, it still remains Gentile, therefore essentially dangerous to the Jew, emancipated or not. For the sake of safety alone—no longer of safety as an increment of salvation—he must still seek his refuge in a version of Halachic order and immobility. However, being irreligious now, he cannot build his "fence" against history on the original divine ordinances, but only

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out of the most general and self-evident features of the traditionally Jewish way of life: middle-class orderliness, routine, prudence, sedentary stability, application to daily tasks—and chronic anxiety about the future that leaves little room for sentiment about the past.

The price Kafka pays for the safety he may feel—if not actually find—in this secular, unwritten, and unspoken neo-Halachic system is claustrophobia. Whereas the old Halachah knows of the history that created the precedents from which it derives its authority, Kafka knows only that there was some history in the past, but not what history. Religious Halachah, while denying the Jewish hunger for history its immediate satisfaction, promises it future satisfaction with the Messiah. Kafka's neo-Halachah contains no such promise; yet he, the emancipated Jew, feels the inveterate Jewish yearning for history with a consciousness and an impatience that no Orthodox Jew could permit himself; and feels it all the more because it is he himself, not divine providence, who must deny himself history as long as he continues to fear it.

One can see why Kafka became a Zionist. It is the classical Zionist position in its abiding, secular distrust of the non-Jewish world and non-Jewish history that he states. Marx and other emancipated Jews tried to hurry the Messiah by looking for him in Gentile history and foreseeing the imminent conversion of the Gentiles—not exactly to Judaism, but to a kind of humanity to which Jews could assimilate themselves. Kafka, the Jew of Prague, could not be so disloyal to what his immediate experience told him. His sense of the world around him was the sense of a trap, and as a Jew he was right, as the Jews of Europe had reason to know twenty years after his death, and as those in Prague ten years later still had reason to know.

His historical clairvoyance adds nothing intrinsic to the merits of Kafka's art; it could, conceivably, still be there were his art much less than it is. Only we are better able to understand and enjoy that art when we grasp the part that history, and Kafka's feeling about the Jewish relation to history, play in it. It is history's menace to the Jew that is figured—among other, less definable things—in the scratched "entries" of "barbaric mountain-dwellers" on the stones trimmed for the new temple; in the nomad barbarians who devour living animals under the windows of a passive, hidden emperor; in the unknown enemies of the animal hero of "The Burrow"; in the cats (presumably) that prey on Josephine's mice nation. Once we are aware of what history means to Kafka, the "Hunter Gracchus" fragments, "Dr. Bucephalus," "The Tower of Babel," and other short pieces that seemed the purest of poetry in prose turn out to be less "pure," without losing anything of their power thereby. It is not essential to the effect of Kafka's writing that the reader be any more mystified by his matter than the author himself is.

Nor is it as paradoxical as it might seem that Kafka figures forth history in the persons of barbarians. As a Jew, he feels post-Exilic history to be remote and capricious, hostile to intelligible ends. It belongs somehow to external nature and the restlessness of external nature, and so do nomad barbarians as, presumably, the human metaphors of capriciousness. In other places servants, janitors, coachmen, messengers, innkeepers, and anonymous Gentiles in general represent external nature and its ceaseless historical movement. Such figures are less symbolic than the barbarians because they are less transposed from Kafka's immediate experience; they *are* as well as represent, being the plebeian, lower-class, "folkish" Gentiles whom the Jew actually fears more than he does the seemingly more powerful "authorities."

That Kafka's hero is frustrated and doomed by the "authorities," whereas he is only harassed by the lower classes, does not change this. At least the "authorities" observe the forms and doom him only piecemeal; the *plebs*, left unrestrained in their malevolence, would obliterate Jews as they

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would animals. Kafka was clairvoyant here, too, if we judge from the case of Nazi Germany, where for the first time the *plebs* became the "authorities" in spirit.

NEEDLESS to say, the "Jewish meaning" of Kafka's work does not exhaust its content. Nor is that meaning as consistent as I, for the purposes of exposition, have made it appear. (Least of all is it consistent with respect to the Gentile *plebs*, towards whom Kafka had the typically ambivalent feelings of an enlightened, emancipated Jew, and in whom he could at times, as in *The Castle*, see potential allies as well as present enemies.) It would be wrong in any case to pin Kafka down to specific allegorical meanings. There is allegory in his fiction—the most successful allegory in a century and more of literature—but what makes it succeed when it does is that it transcends all final interpretation by virtue of its form.

Yet Kafka's form is Jewish, too. While he is not alone among great modern writers in finding it difficult to charge his matter with dramatic—as distinct from "nervous"—tension and draw it to dramatic resolution (think of Joyce, Eliot, Pound, Mann), Kafka makes it more difficult for himself by proceeding, as Halachah does in evolving and deciding law, with a patient, if selective, circumstantiality that belongs more to description and logical exposition than to narrative. By dint of being manipulated, the details manage to move the story, but at what is often an intolerably slow pace. Kafka's scrupulousness, governed by so anxious a vision, risks appearing mannered at times, and the manner risks boring us.

This is why, in my opinion, his shorter efforts are generally more successful than his novels or extended short stories like "The Metamorphosis." Where description and exposition provide most of it, the action must be short. Beyond a certain point the peculiarly stealthy, gradual movement in time and perception that Kafka is able to achieve tends to bore the reader—whose patience is further taxed by the insufficient promise of a resolution. For resolutions and denouements would tear apart the fabric of Kafka's universe, in which conclusive acts and events cannot but be anti-climactic, too particular and local in meaning and time to resolve the entire weight of suspense, doubt, and ignorance. States of being are what are conclusive here, and these for Kafka can have no beginnings or endings, only middles. What is more, these exclude moral issues, and hence no moral choices are made in Kafka's fiction. To the extent that this fiction succeeds, it refutes the assumption of many of the most serious critics of our day—F. R. Leavis is notably one of them—that the value of a work of literary art depends ultimately on the depth to which it explores moral difficulties.

A world all "middle" is claustrophobic. Nor is this the only source of claustrophobia. Alien forces invade Kafka's system of safety, but they do not let air into it. Rather, it turns out that they have been in it from the first, built into it, and that the system is not one of safety, but of doom. Doom has been there all the time, as orderly, implicit, and immobile as safety was supposed to be. Kafka's neo-Halachah is a mockery of the old one: it is wide open inside a closed and stifling world. In conveying this Kafka says, essentially, everything he has to say. The premises of his vision and sensibility necessitate certain conclusions so absolutely that it requires relatively little "business" to act or worry them out. I think that Kafka had some realization of how tautological his imagination was on the plane of fiction—enough to feel disappointed by his attempts to create fiction that would feel like fiction. This may be the reason, or part of the reason, why he asked Max Brod to burn his writings after he was dead.

MORE than anything else, Kafka wanted to accept himself as a writer, not as a seer, prophet, or visionary—as a writer of fiction, not of oracles, and a writer of fiction in prose, not a kind of hybrid poet. Under other circumstances he might indeed have been a poet in form as well as substance, but, as it was, too much spurious culture, too

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many alien associations were connected with verse—in German or any other European tongue—for Kafka's requirements. Poetry in meter would have been too high-falutin, too Gentile, would have involved a mortal falsification.

And might not fiction, too, and literature in general be falsification? One feels that what Kafka wanted to convey transcended literature, and that somewhere, inside him, in spite of himself, art had inevitably to seem shallow, or at least too incomplete to be profound, when compared with reality. (This, too, was in the Jewish tradition.) Insofar as he radically tests the limits of art or literature, Kafka is one of the most "modern" of writers. But to say this is not to bestow undiluted praise. If the forms and conventions of fiction are not completely adequate to Kafka's vision, his own work suffers for it. Its shortcomings are due, more than anything else, to his effort to compel writing, language, literature, to do things they could not. This, too, makes him a "modern" writer.

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ROBERT WARSHOW

1917 — 1955

ROBERT WARSHOW, who had been an editor of COMMENTARY since shortly after its inception, died on March 18, at the age of thirty-seven. The loss to his friends on the magazine—we were all his friends, and most of us his close ones—is as great as to COMMENTARY itself.

Nine years of daily association with him leave no doubt in our minds as to what an altogether kind, upright, and loyal, as well as gifted, young man he was. What he had, completely, was *character*. What he was, completely, and in the most literal sense, was a gentleman. We were, and are, proud of him, as a human being and as a Jew.

THE loss is all the bitterer because he died in the ripeness of his promise. His brilliant film, literary, and general cultural criticism, which appeared in other magazines as well as COMMENTARY over the last few years, had been received with increasing admiration, both here and abroad. When he fell ill he was at work on a book of essays on the moving pictures. He was, in the opinion of many, one of the best writers of prose on the scene—a natural writer through and through—and had only begun to reveal the full measure of himself at the time of his death.

He was, too, an extraordinary editor. His intelligence, sympathy, patience, and, above all, his selflessness, helped many a young author find himself as a writer. They will remain permanently indebted to him.

COMMENTARY will not be the same without him. His presence, no less than his abilities, contributed immensely to whatever the magazine has achieved so far. No one can possibly fill his place, either in the office or in our hearts.

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THE DOSSIER OF WOLF LADEJINSKY

The Fair Rewards of Distinguished Civil Service

JAMES RORTY

LAST November Wolf Ladejinsky, then agricultural attaché of the American embassy in Tokyo, flew home to participate in trade conferences with the Japanese economic mission which was at that time in Washington. Ladejinsky was famous throughout Asia as the prime architect of the land reform program which, beyond any other measure instituted by the American occupation, had prevented Communist capture of the Japanese countryside. After the conferences, Ladejinsky remained in Washington awaiting his expected transfer from the State Department to the Department of Agriculture, under the new law that puts agricultural attachés under the latter's jurisdiction. His reappointment, he had been assured, was pending; meanwhile the Department of Agriculture, with which he had a record of nineteen years of unblemished service, was reimbursing the State Department for his $11,000 a year salary.

It was not until early in December that the grapevine warned Ladejinsky something was wrong. Then, on December 15, he was summoned to the office of Assistant Secretary Earl Butz. After an embarrassed preliminary to the effect that he had found in Ladejinsky's record nothing but what merited praise, Mr. Butz said that Secretary Benson had decided not to reappoint him to his Tokyo post; in the Secretary's judgment he lacked the American farm background required to represent American agriculture abroad, and being foreign born he could not interpret the American way of life to the peoples of Asia.

During the next few days the case of Wolf Ladejinsky fumed and smoldered like a trailing fuse, spreading dismay and indignation through the long corridors and multitudinous cubicles of the permanent staff of the Department of Agriculture.

When Clark Mollenhoff broke the story in the December 19, 1954 issue of the Des Moines *Register* it made first-page news not only from coast to coast but around the world. In the Far East, where Ladejinsky's anti-Communist services were well known, shocked headlines blazed from Tokyo to New Delhi. As James A. Michener wrote later in a letter to the New York *Times*, it was "as if Richard Nixon and Adlai Stevenson were to be charged with subversion."

Ladejinsky first learned that there were also security charges against him from the early news stories. At his interview with Assistant Secretary Butz nothing had been said about security. Now it appeared that "former Communists" had testified that Ladejinsky's employment for a year, in 1931, by the Amtorg Trading Corporation had "required clearance by the Communist party." This and other security reasons, read the statement, including the fact that Ladejinsky had three sisters in Russia, "preclude the department . . . from granting [him] the necessary security clearance."

WHEN the Department of Agriculture, headed by Utah's Ezra Benson, refused to give security clearance to Wolf Ladejinsky, architect of the Japanese land reform instituted by the American occupation, the spotlight was cast on a number of problems that have long made Americans uneasy. How well were the Eisenhower-initiated security measures operating in the various Washington departments? How effectively were certain departments, like Agriculture, fulfilling their functions in general, domestic and foreign, under their new political heads? JAMES RORTY is the veteran journalist whose work appears so frequently in this magazine. He has written numerous books on advertising, medicine, food and politics, and also several volumes of verse. Born in Middletown, New York, in 1890, he now lives on several acres of farmland in Flatbrookville, New Jersey.

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REPERCUSSIONS were immediate. Newspaper commentators pointed out that Ladejinsky had been cleared as recently as the preceding May under the revised criteria of the Eisenhower security program. Representative Walter Judd of Minnesota, an expert on Far Eastern affairs, sprang to his defense, declaring that in his opinion Ladejinsky was "the man who had done more than any other to combat Communism in Asia." Mr. Judd announced that he was scheduled to meet with Secretary Benson to urge reconsideration of the decision. From Tokyo the correspondent of the New York *Times* cabled that both Japanese and Americans were amazed and outraged at the decision not to re-employ Ladejinsky, and that he could find no informed person who knew any reason to justify Secretary Benson's action. Ambassador John M. Allison issued a statement in praise of Ladejinsky, emphasizing that the Japanese Communists had often attacked him; he warned that the Ladejinsky affair was damaging the prestige of the United States in the Orient.

At this point Scott MacLeod, the State Department's security chief, entered the controversy to correct an earlier statement by Milan D. Smith, executive assistant to Secretary Benson, that he had concurred in Agriculture's decision that Ladejinsky was a security risk. Mr. MacLeod declared he had done nothing of the sort. Mr. Smith was also mistaken, he said, in stating that the State Department had never reevaluated Ladejinsky's security file on the basis of the new Eisenhower criteria.

"I took my crack at the Ladejinsky case last April," said Mr. MacLeod, adding he hadn't been excited by the fact that Ladejinsky was Russian-born and had sisters still living in Russia, or that he had worked in 1931 for Amtorg. All this had been more than balanced by the evidence, he said, of Ladejinsky's land reform work having impeded Communism in the Far East.

"We don't have any partly pregnant employees," concluded MacLeod. Ladejinsky had been completely cleared, otherwise he wouldn't be on State's pay roll.

MacLeod's statement revealed a gaping flaw in the Eisenhower security program: the lack of an interdepartmental appeal arrangement to settle security cases on which different departments had reached different conclusions. At the same time it challenged the competence of Agriculture's security personnel. The Department's young security officer, John G. Cassity, had been appointed only a few weeks before; his preparation for his job consisted of two years' experience as vice consul in Stuttgart screening Displaced Persons. "Those anti-Communist articles," said Mr. Cassity, referring to articles by Ladejinsky on Japanese land reform which had been published in the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Country Gentleman*, and the *Saturday Review* "would have been enough to bother me when you consider that this man had relatives in Russia." In other words, Ladejinsky could have written them as a permitted "cover"—a theory deriving apparently from Senator McCarthy, who once suggested that James Wechsler had conducted his anti-Communist activities under direction of the party.

If Secretary Benson disagreed with this theory, he gave no sign. Instead, he permitted Mr. Cassity's chief, Milan D. Smith, to give an even more extraordinary press interview. Smarting from the lash of the MacLeod statement, Smith told press interviewers that he would now prove "how right we were" in refusing to clear Ladejinsky. He made public an 8-page letter received on December 23 from George M. Vitt, a White Russian, then editor of the *American Exporter*. Mr. Vitt wrote he was not a Jew-baiter, since "some of my best friends are Jews," but—it was regrettable that there was "a goodly share of Russian Jews" among Russian revolutionaries who had come to this country for political asylum during the past half century or more. Moreover, "from my own experience with Amtorg, especially in their early days . . . their own interpreters were among the key-important people . . . [whose] reliability had to be 100 per cent certain." Vitt added that in his opinion "no former Russian who is to boot 'a disliker of

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Communism' and who has professed himself to be one in published articles . . . could possibly go and have himself a nice trip to Moscow to chin with his sisters and father. . . ."*

By this time the Ladejinsky imbroglio had reached the White House, where it was creasing the brows of the President's top policy advisers. On December 24 it had been announced, after a conference between Benson and the President, that Mr. Eisenhower would back his Secretary of Agriculture. But how could he do so and at the same time back both the State Department and the long-suffering Harold Stassen, chief of the Foreign Operations Administration, who had obviously been elected to pull the administration's chestnuts out of the fire? Six months before, FOA had vainly asked Secretary Benson to release Ladejinsky so that it might hire him to direct an emergency land reform program in Vietnam. Now, after Secretary Benson's conference with the President, Mr. Stassen announced that, although Ladejinsky had made a significant contribution in Japan and the Far East generally, he could not offer him the job for which he had sought him six months earlier until the security issue was resolved.

On January 5, after one of the speediest security reviews on record, it *was* resolved. FOA announced "the appointment of Wolf Ladejinsky to work in the field of his specialty with assignment immediately to assist in the program of land reform in Vietnam." Mr. Stassen stated that Secretary Benson "had expressed satisfaction that this opportunity for employment in FOA will probably make good use of his [Ladejinsky's] special qualifications."

Meanwhile, however, Secretary Benson continued to mutter that he still thought he was right to avoid every temptation to say a good word about Ladejinsky, and to give press interviews in which he sometimes surpassed even the fatuousness of his aides. "I don't know much about land reform policy in Asia," he is reported as saying. "Nor about what Ladejinsky did in Japan. But I would not want to see such a program in this country."

It was not at all surprising, therefore, that at the January 12 White House press conference, the Ladejinsky affair was dumped squarely in the President's lap; whereupon Mr. Eisenhower proceeded to juggle it until his best friends blushed for him.

The President said that Secretary Benson had read him a summary of the case, but that he hadn't studied it. At one point he remarked that the Secretary's summary "would have scared him" . . . though he hadn't studied the other side of the question, and hadn't realized that this man had "written an anti-Communist book." At another point he hazarded the notion that "Vietnam was not so sensitive that he [Ladejinsky] could damage the United States"—as much presumably as he could damage the United States in his old post in Japan.

Thus, as Walter Lippman pointed out, "though Mr. Ladejinsky had been formally cleared for the job in Vietnam, the President's remarks about him denied him a moral clearance and left him under a cloud of suspicion." That cloud was still undispelled three weeks later at the February 2 press conference, by which time Ladejinsky was on his way to Vietnam, when in answer to a question by Clark Mollenhoff the President, referring to the differing views of Secretary Benson and Mr. Stassen, said that "each of them had followed their best judgment,

*The release of this letter, and Vitt's subsequent statement that Mr. Smith had telephoned him from Washington to congratulate him on "the most intelligent letter he had received on the Ladejinsky case," brought vigorous protests from Jewish agencies. On New Year's Day Irving M. Engel, president of the American Jewish Committee, telegraphed Secretary Benson urging his prompt disavowal of the "deplorable characterizations" contained in the Vitt communication. Secretary Benson replied that the Vitt letter did not reflect the view of the Department. Subsequently at a conference with representatives of the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League, Secretary Benson frankly confessed that the action of his executive assistant in releasing the Vitt letter was a mistake, adding that the Department had not previously known that Ladejinsky was a Jew.

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and the man had been rehired and it was a *fait accompli.*" At the March 16 press conference the President still would not state forthrightly that an injustice had been done, merely saying that "the particular [Ladejinsky] case was still under investigation, and a final report had not been made."

Thus ended the first round of the Ladejinsky affair, to be resumed by the Senate Committee on the Post Office and the Civil Service, which has promised a full investigation of the case, and probably by other committees concerned with the security system.

THROUGH all the welter of newspaper publicity the figure of Wolf Ladejinsky as a person remained obscure. About all the American public could gather was that he was a Russian Jewish immigrant who had become an outstanding land expert, not by farming but by cultivating the academic vineyards of Columbia University and then doing a prodigious amount of field work in half the countries of Asia. Ladejinsky himself would as soon let it go at that. He is a friendly and charming person, but when you ask him about himself he is puzzled and mildly annoyed, because he has just finished telling you about his government career and his writings, all of which are in the records anyway.

Two days before he left for Indo-China, I interviewed Ladejinsky in the over-age walkup apartment that he occupies, while in Washington, with two other bachelors. Except for the books taking up most of the wall space and a notable record collection, the place was monastic-looking, with a characteristic bachelor untidiness. One of Wolf's roommates washed his socks in the bathroom washbowl while the other broiled a steak and answered the continually ringing telephone.

Ladejinsky is now fifty-six and looks somewhat less. He is of medium height, ruggedly built, with black hair beginning to turn gray. The face is dark, mobile, heavily lined, the eyes startlingly blue—he looks rather like an American Indian. Secretary Benson to the contrary, there is nothing very "foreign" about Ladejinsky except his name.

Wolf Isaac Ladejinsky was born March 15, 1899, in the Ukrainian town of Ekaterinopol, in Russia. His father was a successful miller and trader in grain and lumber. They occupied a comfortable home outside the town, close to the peasants and forest workers with whom his father dealt. Wolf worked in his father's flour mill while a schoolboy in Ekaterinopol; during his teens he attended the Gymnasium in the nearby town of Zvengorodka, where he got the equivalent of a junior college degree in this country. He would have continued his education at a university but for the 1917 revolution, which brought disaster to the family.

Wolf's father, who could remember an earlier period of terror during the 1905 revolution, now saw his mill and other property confiscated and his household impoverished. Ekaterinopol changed hands several times as Communists, Whites, and Ukrainian Nationalists took it and lost it. Pogroms broke out in neighboring villages and Wolf, then a youth of eighteen, saw dozens of people murdered by mobs whose leaders shouted that all Jews were Communists.

By 1920 the Soviet power was established in the Ukraine. Wolf's brother had been killed during the civil war. His three sisters felt they must stay with their aging parent, but that it was for Wolf, as the only boy in the family, to escape if he could. He remembers that it took him thirty days, afoot and riding in the horse carts of peasants, to reach the Dniester, and that it took all his remaining money to pay the group that signaled him when to run for his life across the frozen river.

In Bessarabia, then Rumanian territory, Wolf got a job in a flour mill and saved enough in six months to get to Kishenev, the capital of the province. There, by trading in firewood, he made enough money to get to Bucharest, where he became a baker's apprentice. Later, the Bucharest office of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society gave him a white-collar job. "Go west, young man," advised a kindly HIAS official—it was years later that Wolf realized his friend had been quoting Horace Greeley. His boat sailed

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from the Rumanian port of Galatz and berthed in Hoboken, N.J. He landed broke, and got his first job in a shirt factory. From this he graduated to buttonhole-making, mattress-making, shoemaking, and then to a newspaper route.

WITHIN five years after he left Rumania Wolf felt that he knew enough English to put his feet back on the educational ladder that the Bolshevik Revolution had pulled from under him. Columbia gave him a two-year credit, based on his Gymnasium diploma. As for the tuition: "That newspaper stand at 50th and Sixth Avenue, where Radio Center is now, was a popular stand. And during the quiet hours I could read what they called the 'quality' magazines, like *World's Work* and *Century*. I cleared around $15 a week and, given the relative cheapness of living in those days, I could save just enough to put myself through Columbia."

Wolf got his B.S. degree in two years, was graduated in the class of 1928, and naturalized the same year. He was on his way toward a master's degree in economics when, in 1930, Amtorg offered him a job as an interpreter at $40 a week—nearly three times what he was then making. It was strictly an interpreter's job, he says, involving no political clearance. The depression was on and scores of White Russians were being similarly employed by Amtorg. (Nearly a quarter of a century later, the security officer of the Department of Agriculture was to inflate Ladejinsky's Amtorg job into that of "economist, investigator, and assistant to the chief of the bureau of transportation.") When Wolf was fired within a year without explanation, he went back to selling newspapers. Meanwhile, he continued taking courses at Columbia with the hope of getting a doctorate in economics. (He had obtained his master's degree from Columbia in 1932.) Wolf never did get his Ph.D., although in 1934 he finished a comprehensive study of the Soviet state farms which he had hoped might be the basis for a thesis.

The study was entitled "Soviet State Farms" and was published in 1938 in two successive issues of the *Political Science Quarterly*. This was Wolf's first published writing in English and the first treatment in English of the Soviet state farms. It made his professional reputation, and remains today an important item in the literature of the subject. The study describes the repeated failure of the Soviet state farms and the disastrous consequences of substituting primitive bureaucratic Marxism for scientific agriculture; it could not have pleased the Soviet authorities, to put it mildly.

Why, then, was Ladejinsky able to get a visa to enter Russia in 1939 after being turned down repeatedly during the previous two years? Ladejinsky says he doesn't know, but wishes he did, because, "If I knew the workings of the Russian bureaucratic mind I could be of a great deal more help to this country than I have been."

IN 1935 Wolf had applied for and got a job in the Foreign Agricultural Relations Division of the United States Department of Agriculture, starting at the bottom at $2,000 a year. He was assigned first to studies of Russian agriculture, later of Far Eastern agriculture. When in 1939 he got a visa to enter Russia he went there with the knowledge and approval of his superiors. His purpose was dual; he wanted to learn more about Soviet agriculture, and to see his sisters. (His father had meanwhile died.) During his ten-week stay in Russia, Ladejinsky made periodic reports to the United States Embassy officials in Moscow. He left after the Embassy informed him that war was imminent in Europe and he risked being held in Russia by the Soviet authorities because of his Russian birth.

In 1939 Ladejinsky published his second major study. It was entitled "Japan's Agricultural Crisis" and appeared in the *Journal of Farm Economics*. Practically all the reforms that Ladejinsky, with the backing of his superiors in SCAP, was subsequently able to carry out in Japan are envisaged in this lucid and comprehensive analysis, which still warrants reading.

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DURING the war Ladejinsky did special studies of Japanese agriculture and lectured at the military and civil affairs schools that had been established at Harvard, Yale, the University of Chicago, and elsewhere to train officers destined for jobs with the occupying authorities. Shortly after V-J Day he was loaned to MacArthur, and arrived in Japan late in 1945.

"We traveled all over Japan," says Ladejinsky. "We walked on the land and we talked to the people—the peasants as well as the landlords, the money-lenders, and the Japanese agricultural experts. Many of the latter had been struggling for years with the chronic crisis of Japanese agriculture, but had been kept from accomplishing any significant reforms by the entrenched opposition of the Japanese landlord class."

The American occupation made it possible, for the first time, to overrule this opposition. By 1947 the Japanese peasants were beginning to enjoy the first fruits of the land reforms which they had been demanding, not always patiently, for over a century. When SCAP took over, 70 per cent of Japanese farm families were tenants, paying rent to their landlords in the form of half or more of their annual yield. Fifty per cent of these tenants were renting less than 1.2 acres, and another 27 per cent an average of 1.7 acres each. In addition to paying 50 per cent of his yields to the landlord, the tenant had to supply his own housing, tools, fertilizer, and seed. Competition for land kept both land values and rental rates far higher than the productivity of the soil would justify.

What enabled the Japanese landlords to resist successfully the repeated legislative efforts to improve the lot of the peasantry was their sheer numbers and their strategic position in the Japanese village. Although there were large landowners in Japan—3 per cent of the farm-owners held 30 per cent of the cultivated land—the vast majority of landlords, numbering several thousand, collected rent from small parcels of land, often less than an acre. In every village they held the dominant power; and the long history of agrarian unrest had welded them together into a chief support of the reactionary, militaristic parties of Japan. Describing this situation in the first article he published after the adoption of the agrarian reform law, Ladejinsky wrote: "Their [the landlords'] importance as a bulwark against Japan's social and political reorientation, as prescribed in the Potsdam declaration, was lost neither on thoughtful Japanese nor on the American occupation authorities. It was, therefore, as much from a recognition of the close relationship between the anti-democratic tradition of Japan and the rural landlord system, as from an interest in the tenant farmer's welfare, that a redistribution of land ownership became occupation policy. General MacArthur, in his land-reform directive of December 13, 1945, ordered the Japanese government 'to take measures that those who till the soil of Japan shall have a more equal opportunity to enjoy the fruits of their labor,' not as an end in itself but in order to 'remove economic obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies, establish respect for the dignity of man, and destroy the economic bondage which has enslaved the Japanese farmer to centuries of feudal oppression.'"*

UPON Ladejinsky was placed the responsibility for implementing this directive. In collaboration with leading Japanese agricultural economists, he wrote the provisions of the Special Measure for the Establishment of Owner-Farmers (Land Reform Law) and Agricultural Adjustment Law of 1946. The reform provided for the purchase by the Japanese government of approximately 5,000,000 acres, or about 80 per cent of the farmlands under tenant cultivation, for subsequent resale to the tenants, the transfer to be accomplished within two years.

Although the landlords were compensated for the land they lost, they suffered heavily as a result of the currency inflation that followed adoption of the land reform program,

*"The Promise of Agrarian Reform in Japan," by William M. Gilmartin and W. I. Ladejinsky, *Foreign Affairs*, October-January, 1947-48.

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and the tenants got a windfall. It was high time. For centuries it had been the Japanese peasants who had paid the bills for the civil and foreign wars conducted by the Japanese landlords, militarists, and nobles, and also the huge bill for Japan's industrialization during the 19th and 20th centuries. Now, at last, the yoke was being lifted from their necks, and in every province Japanese peasants fingered their deeds with incredulous joy.

The Japanese Communists and the Russians were rather less joyful. In another article,* published a year later, Ladejinsky told why. From the beginning of the occupation General Derevyanko, the Soviet representative to the Four Power Council for Japan, had demagogically demanded the immediate expropriation of the land at no cost to anybody except the landlord, taunting his American colleagues on the Council with their slowness in launching agrarian reform. In the villages Communist party agents echoed this line, demanding immediate collectivization on the Russian model.

In the Japanese Diet, the landlords and their allies among the reactionary parties made common cause with the Communists in denouncing SCAP's program. If it became law, they warned, the Japanese peasant would stand helpless and alone without a friend against the calamities of nature and the exactions of government, the annual festivals would lack for patrons, and the temples would fall to ruins. But everywhere the peasants were equally emphatic in rejecting the "protection" of their former masters and the tutelage of their Communist "friends," whose next move, as in Russia and Eastern Europe, would have been to rob them of their newly acquired land and tie them down like serfs on state farms.

The Japanese Communists knew well whom to blame for their discomfiture and defeat, the worst they had suffered during the occupation and one which largely destroyed their influence in the Japanese villages. Both the Russian and the Japanese Communist press raged continuously against MacArthur and his agrarian advisers. (It was in this period that Ladejinsky stopped writing his sisters in Russia lest his letters endanger them.)

By the beginning of 1947, the success of Ladejinsky's program was so well established that General MacArthur wrote a letter, on January 16, to the Department of Agriculture stating that he had performed "outstanding services in the land reform program of Japan." Elsewhere MacArthur has declared that the land reform program "did more to cut the ground from under the Japanese Communists than any other measure taken during the occupation." By this time, from Tokyo to Delhi, Ladejinsky's name had become synonymous with land reform. In the words of Gove Hambidge, FAO's director of information, he was "the most sought-after land authority in Asia—it is necessary to ration his services." Between 1947 and 1950, as Chief of the Far Eastern Division of the USDA's office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, Ladejinsky made trips to China in an effort to institute land reforms in what was left of Chiang Kai-shek's China, to India, and to Formosa, where he succeeded in reducing rents from 70 per cent of the crop to 37.5 per cent.

After the land reform program was solidly established in Japan, the USDA loaned Ladejinsky to the State Department in 1950 to try to expand the Japanese market for American agricultural products (precisely the task Secretary Benson considers the major responsibility of the agricultural attachés now under his jurisdiction). Within a short time Ladejinsky was proving that he was no less gifted as a diplomat and negotiator than as a land reformer. As a result, sales of American agricultural products to Japan rose steadily to a peak of nearly $480,000,000 in 1954—25 per cent of the total export sales of American agricultural products in that year. No European country has ever approached that figure. The files of the Department are full of telegrams from

*"Japanese Communists Lose a Battle," by Darrell Berrigan and W. I. Ladejinsky, *Saturday Evening Post*, June 8, 1949.

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American food-exporters applauding Ladejinsky's efforts.

IT IS unlikely that subsequent investigation will add much to the foregoing record of what happened to Wolf Ladejinsky under the Eisenhower security program. How and why it happened are harder matters to determine. Ladejinsky himself was still puzzled when he left for Vietnam, while Secretary Benson's and his aides' early garrulity had turned into an unhappy official silence. One is reduced, therefore, to weighing various speculative alternatives:

(1) Was anti-Semitism a factor in Ladejinsky's dismissal?

Ladejinsky himself is disposed to doubt this. Xenophobia, perhaps—even the kind of Midwestern xenophobia that finds the foreignness of a Russian Jew a shade more foreign and "un-American" than most other kinds of foreignness. As far back as 1945, when Ladejinsky was loaned to General MacArthur, Representative Carl Curtis of Nebraska complained that "a foreigner is getting a job that a Middle Western dirt farmer could do better." But neither at that time nor subsequently was any direct reference made to Ladejinsky's Jewishness. On this question Ladejinsky says: "Never in my entire career in America, either at the university, in the United States Department of Agriculture, in the army, or in the State Department, have I encountered the slightest evidence of discrimination because of my 'race.'"

(2) If we assume, then, that anti-Semitism was a negligible factor in Ladejinsky's dismissal, what about Secretary Benson's assertion that he lacked "technical qualifications" for the job? On this point there is some interesting evidence. On August 8, 1954, when the prospective transfer from State to Agriculture came up for discussion, the administrator of the Office of Foreign Agricultural Affairs, W. G. Lodwick, wrote Ladejinsky: "We hope you will decide to join the staff of the Department of Agriculture and will appreciate your advising of your wishes regarding your transfer as soon as possible." On October 7, Ladejinsky learned from the acting assistant administrator of the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations that there had been requests for his services from the State Department and Foreign Operations Administration (the National Security Council had decided land reform in Southern Vietnam was needed to keep the country out of Communist hands), but that Secretary Benson had written FOA Administrator Harold Stassen that Ladejinsky could not be released. "You are one of the key men," wrote the acting assistant administrator, "in the very important negotiations with Japan on agricultural commodities."

A week later, on October 15, FAR Administrator Lodwick wrote: ". . . concerning the land reform conference in Bangkok, every one and his big brother has been calling, writing and coming in here to tell us that if you don't go to this conference not only that part of the world but the whole universe will collapse. . . . But . . . to put it bluntly, we cannot spare you at this time."

Clearly Ladejinsky's immediate superiors, who were in the best position to judge his competence, considered him the best man for the job, and were eager to have him accept it.

(3) One is forced, therefore, to suspect something other than doubt of Ladejinsky's technical qualifications. For one thing, there was an acute need of good jobs with which to reward the administration's political supporters, and the post of agricultural attaché to the Tokyo Embassy had become a very good job indeed—second in rank only to the ambassador; under the 1954 law giving Agriculture jurisdiction over agricultural attachés, these positions were taken out of civil service and reclassified in new "super" grades running as high, in major embassies like Tokyo, as $15,000 a year.

(4) There is also the possibility, suggested by Senator Humphrey, that Ladejinsky's dismissal signified a certain coolness toward the idea of land reform abroad on the part of the administration's farm supporters. That Secretary Benson himself may have shared this coolness is suggested by his statement at

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a press conference that he "wouldn't want to see Ladejinsky's program adopted in this country." Washington commentators have noted that in off-the-record interviews some of Secretary Benson's aides have branded the Japanese land distribution as "socialistic." With some reason, the administration's Democratic opponents have said that if American foreign policy turns against land reform, the Communists will have a propaganda weapon they can use with devastating effect in Asia and elsewhere.

(5) There remains the security issue, which Secretary Benson undoubtedly took seriously, however much he may have been influenced by other considerations. Here the most charitable explanation would be that the Secretary was let down by a brash, inexperienced, and to some degree prejudiced staff. This charge is implicit in the statement of former Senator Harry P. Cain, a member of the Subversive Activities Control Board, who declared that "He [Ladejinsky] became unwillingly a *cause célèbre* because some eager beavers and Johnny-come-latelies, in our necessary effort to keep America strong, couldn't take the time to talk to him or relate the points in question to twenty years of a man's private and public life."

Senator Cain's references were scarcely opaque. Mr. Benson's executive assistant, with no previous experience in government, took over his responsibilities on December 1. John G. Cassity, Agriculture's Security Officer, is a wartime intelligence officer from Secretary Benson's home state of Utah; he had held his post exactly ninety days when he decided the Ladejinsky case. It is reported that he was appointed over the protests of the Civil Service Commission.

EVEN the administration supporters admitted that the Ladejinsky case revealed blatant procedural defects in the security system, and in March, Attorney General Brownell announced a seven-point program designed to remedy them. These reforms, as approved by the President, provide that the top legal officer in each department or agency be consulted on the drafting of charges against an accused employee; that a statement of the charges be given to the employee at the time of notice of suspension; and that no officials under the level of an Assistant Secretary are empowered to order suspensions. It is recommended, but not ordered, that personal interviews be accorded employees against whom derogatory information has been received. Agency heads are required to consult each other when one official makes an adverse security evaluation of a person who has been cleared by another agency. In all cases where national security would not be jeopardized, the accused employee may cross-examine witnesses who have given adverse information against him.

But all this overlooks one of the chief lessons of the Ladejinsky case—the danger of politicalizing the administrative personnel of the security system. Obviously these jobs should be reserved for trained career people. The Attorney General's recommendations also by-pass the demand, voiced by the administration's critics, for substantive changes in the security program, including restoration of the interdepartmental appeal board that was abolished under the Eisenhower security program. As this is being written, the need for revising the security system is being explored by two Congressional committees. One is a subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, which is considering Senator Humphrey's bill to establish a bipartisan Commission on Government Security. The other is the Senate Committee on the Post Office and Civil Service, headed by Senator Olin D. Johnston.

Meanwhile, in Vietnam, the central figure of the *cause célèbre* is struggling with the difficult tasks of land reform for which he was asked, and needed, nearly a year ago. Perhaps his help in saving Vietnam from Communism comes too late. But it is not too late to prevent other devoted public servants from being ground between the upper and nether millstones of shoddy party politics and patronage, and a defective, clumsily administered security system.

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TWO MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCES IN WASHINGTON

Competing for Government's Ear on Israel's Fate

HAL LEHRMAN

THE Shoreham Hotel, a favorite Washington convention center for groups seeking the ear of the nation and the nation's government, has never played host to gatherings so dissimilar as the two which held forth, each for a day and a half—the one commencing five hours after the other adjourned—in its meeting halls and dining rooms (the very same ones) during the first weekend of the month of March just passed.

Friday morning through Saturday lunch: the 9th Annual Conference of the Middle East Institute, closing with an address by the Honorable Jefferson Caffery, lately United States Ambassador to Egypt, and attended by some 370 participants largely convinced that one of our major problems in the Arab world is the legacy left by previous allegedly pro-Israel American policy.

Saturday evening and all day Sunday: a Conference of National Jewish Organizations attended by 269 representatives unanimously persuaded that our major problem in the Arab world is the legacy being created by current allegedly pro-Arab American policy.

As HAL LEHRMAN made clear once again in his last month's report on "North Africa's Dilemmas for American Jewry," the latter has a power over the fate of world Jewry such as no single Jewish community has had in a thousand years. This month he reports on a current effort by American Jews to use that influence for the achievement of changes in the Administration's policy toward Israel and the Arabs. Similarly, he analyzes a parallel attempt by other Americans to propagate views diametrically opposed to those of Israel's supporters in this country. Mr. Lehrman, who is today one of the most authoritative of all writers on Jewish affairs at home and abroad, originally made his reputation as a foreign correspondent in Central and East Europe. During the war he was chief of the OWI in Turkey. A native New Yorker, he studied at Cornell. He has published two books, the more recent of which is *Israel: The Beginning and Tomorrow* (1952), and was the recipient of two Guggenheim Fellowships. He is also widely known as a lecturer on world, as well as Jewish, affairs.

HAPPILY, the two meetings missed confronting one another, though the first early arrivals for the pro-Israel deliberations injected a bit of bustle into the relative sedateness pervading the Shoreham lobbies during the Institute's meeting. There was no overlapping in the attendance, except for a few Israeli Embassy people at the Institute sessions as observers and vice-versa for State Department officials at the Conference; the working press (Israeli reporters outnumbering Americans at the earlier meeting); and one representative of the Palestine Economic Corporation who gallantly heckled everybody throughout the long weekend. The two programs had one link: George V. Allen, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs. Allen, a lean and handsome North Carolinian who has been our ambassador to India, Yugoslavia, and Iran and, before that, a Foreign Service officer in Egypt, Greece, China, and Jamaica, spoke at both conferences and said substantially the same thing—an impressive feat, which he accomplished by committing himself to virtually nothing on each occasion.

The Institute brought out, among others, 20 executives of oil companies in the Middle East, some 45 U.S. academic and governmental specialists in Arab affairs, four ex-Ambassadors to Moslem capitals, ten Moslem diplomats and other notables, four associates and at least five members of the American Friends of the Middle East, and 19 Arab students. The Jewish Conference assembled the spokesmen of six major Zionist organizations. Twenty Hadassah ladies, as usual, provided the largest and most fashionable delegation; then there were 16 members from the Zionist Organization of America, 13 from the American Zionist Council, and so on down to a total of seven from four smaller

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political parties affiliated with the Council—Hashomer Hatzair, Hapoel Hamizrachi, Zionist Revisionists, and Achdut Avodah. Ten non-Zionist organizations sent delegations, the biggest of them 24 from B'nai B'rith, 23 from the National Community Relations Advisory Council, 17 from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and 16 each from Mizrachi and the American Jewish Congress.

THE Middle East Institute, founded in 1946, has an impeccably correct charter of intentions. Out of its modest three-story headquarters on N Street in Washington, it sponsors scholarships, lectures, language classes (Arabic and Turkish), exhibits, library and information services, and research surveys. It publishes an occasional book, a bi-monthly four-page *Report,* and a learned quarterly *Journal.*

Unlike the American Friends of the Middle East, which waited some years before conceding by inference that Israel was in the Middle East at all, the Middle East Institute really deals with the Middle East, and tries to do so fairly. This reporter, other writers friendly to Israel, and even Israelis have been printed in the *Journal,* and the three most recent annual conferences have each had one Jewish speaker or two (Professor Alfred Bonne of the Hebrew University in 1954, Professor Salo Baron of Columbia in 1953, Professors Hans Kohn of the College of the City of New York and J. C. Hurewitz of Columbia in 1952).

George Camp Keiser, a pink-cheeked, baldish ex-architect who came to the Moslem cause by way of research in Islamic architecture, is now chairman of the Institute's Board of Governors after having reputedly spirited the control away from its founding fathers on the faculty of the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. Mr. Keiser and his George C. Keiser Foundation make good the Institute's deficit, which annually averages between $15,000 and $20,000. (The Keiser fortune comes from the Boston-based Guantanamo Sugar Company, which has sugar interests in Cuba and is headed by brother David M., genius of the family and, of all things, an accomplished concert pianist.)

Strictly non-profit, the Institute obtains its limited budget ($90,549 for fiscal 1955) mostly from contributions. The Ford Foundation was the biggest donor last year (around $25,000). The Rockefeller Foundation in 1954 gave a small grant for preparation of a book on Middle Eastern law, the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation another for scholarships. Four oil companies make corporate gifts, the largest from Arabian American (Aramco), followed by California Texas, Gulf, and Socony-Vacuum. All these operate in Arab oil fields, which hold more than half of the world's estimated petroleum reserves. Aramco's vice president, James Terry Duce, is on the Institute's Board. (Among the seven other Board members are Texas oilman George C. McGhee, onetime Ambassador to Turkey, three active State Department officials, and a former Ambassador to Iran.)

Even without such financial support, the Institute would normally reflect a dominant interest in matters other than Israeli because of its sphere (from Turkey to Ethiopia, Morocco to Pakistan). Inevitably, the oil-Arab equation infuses this interest with a certain additional sympathy for Moslems. A further stimulus is the traditional missionary influence on American cultural and diplomatic representatives in the Middle East.

Of the eighteen speakers at this year's conference of the Institute nine had been intimately exposed to the missionary viewpoint, either as missionaries themselves, or as teachers or students at mission schools (Robert College in Istanbul, Aleppo College, American University of Beirut, American University at Cairo). My own years as a graduate student in Paris had made me understand how life and work among any people anywhere can induce a lasting sympathy with them—all the more when the work involves missionary zeal for their welfare.

A main speaker at the Institute's 1954 banquet had been Moussa Shabandar, then Iraqi Ambassador, now Iraqi Foreign Minister. Without notice, Dr. Shabandar had used most of his time to attack Israel. This was embarrassing, but not enough to prevent the Institute from trying for an Arab spokesman again this year. Since stresses and strains in the Arab League are current news, first choice was Kamel Abdul Rahim, its chief representative in the U.S., who, it was felt, might be able to speak more frankly

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than any accredited envoy because of his non-diplomatic status. Abdul Bey seemed willing, delayed accepting for three weeks, and finally said no, presumably because of the present delicate juncture in League fortunes. Jordanian Ambassador Abdul Monem Rifa'i, having a previous engagement, declined at once. In the end, no Arab graced the program. There were, however, two Moslems—who, by universal verdict, contributed the dullest performances. Anwar Ali, a Pakistani official of the International Monetary Fund, spoke English that sounded like Arabic in brogue and emptied half a lecture hall. Mohammad Kabir Ludin, Ambassador from Afghanistan, seemed to be asleep on his feet. All in all, it was a Black Friday for the fruits of Western enlightenment in Islam.

EARLIER years had programmed the Institute's discussions under such bland headings as "Islam in the Modern World," "Nationalism in the Middle East," or "Middle East Resources: Problems and Prospects." This time the title was the somewhat more admonitory "The Evolution of Public Responsibility in the Middle East," suggesting a firmer approach, a kind of admonition or nudge to move on with the business of growing up. Also, every speaker, in referring to Arab progress, diluted his praise with such phrases as "much more must be done," or "this is only a beginning," or "the road ahead is long."

Apart from these ritual nods, however, the trend was persistently bullish for *Arabia resurrecta*. Everybody did his best to locate and hold up for applause the proofs of Arab advance toward political, social, and economic stability. The air was suffused with a benevolent paternalism. Coming in from the moon, an observer could not have escaped concluding that the Arab was one of the nobler works of God, a bit underdone, perhaps, still faltering and needing guidance, but sure—if only the West had patience—to fulfill the trust put in him.

This thesis was not debated at the Institute's proceedings. It was axiomatic—and it had the ineluctable corollary that since the Arab was a fine fellow, anyone quarreling with him was likely not to be one. This did not apply to Westerners, of course, especially Americans, who were even finer fellows, but it did apply to Israelis—not necessarily in their own context, but certainly to Israelis in connection with Arabs. And it also applied to past American succor for "Zionism." The monster at the Institute feast, never mentioned by name or allusion but ever present in memory, was Harry Truman.

ON THURSDAY evening, at the DuPont Plaza Hotel two blocks from the Institute, dinner was served to some 65 business representatives and economists convened for a pre-conference discussion of "area political and economic stability, investment climate, etc." Present were Aramco, Standard of New Jersey, Gulf Oil, Tide Water Associated, Cal Tex, Socony-Vacuum, American Independent, Ford International, General Motors, Chase National Bank, National City Bank, Olin Mathieson Chemical, American Export Lines, and others. Among the speakers were the deputy chief of the American diplomatic mission to one Arab country, a former U.S. Ambassador to another, now serving as an oil company consultant, and a prominent American educator just returned from a Middle Eastern tour.

According to authoritative report, anyone who heard their speeches would have carried away with him the following: even where large native funds are being expended for economic and social improvement, Arab progress was far from rapid. (A magnificent hospital was built in one remote area; it was inaugurated with éclat by the reigning sovereign some years ago; since then, the bedsheets have not been changed.) It had to be admitted that not enough was being done by local governments to raise living standards, but things were brewing. American investment ought to go in. It must go in. When it did it would meet opposition provoked by our diplomatic blunders. Worst among these was our Palestine policy. But at long last now we were giving equal treatment to both sides, and healing the wounds. We were even reaching out through religion. (A recent global conference of Moslem and Christian notables took place at Bhamdoun in Lebanon, financed by the Dearborn Foundation.) The present administration was working hard to persuade the Arabs of our honest intentions. American business should support this policy, and participate in the region's economic future. Only remember

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this: in the Middle East you trade with Israel *or* the Arab states. *You can't trade with both.* Beware of the Arab boycott against all who do business with the Jewish state.

Someone asked about West Germany and the Arabs. Hadn't the Arabs sworn to boycott Bonn if it paid Jewish reparations? Yet weren't the Arabs still dealing with the Germans? So why this absolute either-or? Wasn't it in the larger American national interest for private investors to build up *both* sides? Answer: Yes, but it's impossible. The Arabs finally gave in on West Germany only because they were convinced that Jewish reparations had been forced on the Germans by Washington (!). (This writer recalls being in Berlin in late 1953, long after the German-Israeli reparations agreement, when a visiting Saudi Arabian economic mission was eagerly handing out contracts to German firms. I asked one Saudi spokesman how he reconciled this with previous boycott threats. He shrugged his shoulders and grinned: "We didn't get away with it." The Turks, too, seem to be able to deal with both Arab and Israeli. As a matter of fact, even American oil companies can. Doesn't at least one of the firms extracting oil from Arabia sell its gasoline to motorists from pumps on Israeli highways?)

THE Institute's public proceedings got under way to a fairly full house in the Shoreham's Main Ballroom Friday morning with words of welcome by George Keiser, followed by papers on the current Middle Eastern situation "As Seen by Americans" (Princeton's Professor T. Cuyler Young, Chairman of the Oriental Languages and Literature Department) and "As Seen by Middle Easterners" (Pakistan's Anwar Ali).

Dr. Young amiably suggested that if we wanted the native peoples to show "public responsibility," we might legitimately be expected to be responsible ourselves. Our policies toward the area have not been as "clear cut" as desired. Gingerly, in a convoluted sentence, he mentioned as one example "the Palestine question," where "there was partial interference [by the U.S.] demanding, under our own pressures, certain points of establishment and then a failure to follow through. . . ." He closed with the standard big-brother plea: "There are many of us who get exasperated with . . . the irresponsibility of young nations. But let's remember that we were young once ourselves." For Anwar Ali, the basis of Middle Eastern instability was the "growing restiveness . . . of the underprivileged masses" and feudal-tribal pressures. He spoke of production methods "unchanged through the decades," the dominance of moneylenders, and other ills. But "the governments in the various countries are showing a growing consciousness of these problems." "A great deal has been done but a lot more needs to be done." Looking around, he saw many "hopeful signs."

After lunch came my colleague from OWI days, Dr. John Badeau, now head of the Near East Foundation, long-time president of the American University in Cairo, and no mincer of words on "The Problem of Stability among Middle East Governments." He spoke frankly of recent convulsions in various of these governments but also noted evidence that the "outlook is probably more hopeful than at any time since 1945." Dr. Badeau listed such great and stabilizing advances as the Sudan-Suez, Iranian oil, and Iraqi pact settlements. Of all the remaining "factors of tension," the Arab-Israel problem is "major." Here Dr. Badeau went forthrightly down the line: Israel is not an indigenous state. It is supported by Western money and political influence. It is populated by immigrants. It was forced upon the Arab world. In Israel the Arabs—right or wrong—see a classic proof of Western meddling. Peace with Israel has been impossible because no Arab leader could survive popular outcry against it.

The speaker went on to other things but referred back to Israel wherever his material permitted. Thus, in discussing the power of "mob" action to force the hands of certain Middle East governments, the following sally was much appreciated by the audience: "Of course, such a policy is not unknown even in the United States, where the incumbent party's desire to win an election has sometimes made it espouse a foreign policy that has not proved to the best interests of the country." Again, in explaining the difficulties of achieving broad-based economic progress in the Middle East, he said: "Israel is often held up as the example of what can be done, but the argument is inconclusive, for Israel has been created and supported by foreign gift capital." If a pre-war estimate of $1,500

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invested per farm "in the Zionist colonies" is accurate, "the Egyptian government would need to invest over $3 billion to bring about like results—and this kind of money is not forthcoming, even if all the landlords were taken out and shot."

Why did the West force Israel on the Arab world, a questioner arose to inquire. To solve the anti-Semitic problem, for which the West, not the Arab world, was responsible: "The West had a guilty conscience." And would Israel collapse without foreign aid, another listener asked. Well, said Badeau, the Israeli pound is officially propped at $2.80, but can be picked up in Switzerland for 40 cents. If foreign support were cut out, he intimated, Israel might seek survival by expanding beyond her present borders, which would mean war. Nobody stood up to remind Dr. Badeau that the official tourist exchange was 55 cents, which was not much further from the free market price than many presumably "stable" currencies. During a brief break, this was privately pointed out to the chairman, Professor Sidney N. Fisher of Ohio State, who communicated it to Dr. Badeau. But by then he was off the platform.

THERE are other problems in the Arab world besides the Israeli. Dr. Badeau, who has known his Arabs long and well, spoke very plainly about these, too. His comments on Israel took only a few minutes of his half-hour speech. In general, the speakers who followed devoted even less attention to Israel. Yet, nearly every time she was mentioned, she automatically came off second best. And when she should have been mentioned as a possible exception to some generalization or other about the area's backwardness, she was not. Nor did anybody suggest, in discussing—as several speakers did—the instability of the Arab regimes and the gulf separating them from their peoples, that there might be something defeating in an American policy that put so much store by propping up such regimes.

Marine Colonel S. G. Taxis spoke of Middle Eastern reluctance to organize militarily for free world defense, without mentioning the Israeli exception to the rule. He chided the Arab world on its failure to recognize Moscow as Enemy Number One. Yet when an Arab student rose to charge that the Arabs had reason to fear Zionism and Western colonialism more than they fear Moscow, the Colonel generously admitted it might indeed seem so from a strictly Middle Eastern point of view, and added almost abjectly: "These problems are not all of your making. We have to take a lot of the blame."

In an excellent paper on the socio-political aspects of Middle Eastern economic development, California Professor George Lenczowski noted the possibility that the Arab industrial advance and economic revolution for which the West is pressing might complicate the Western search for stability by increasing Arab mass appetites and dissatisfactions, but he sidestepped the implications of this for Washington policy. His vigorous discussion of "shocking contrasts and abuses" and other frailties gave no hint that many of these might not apply to Israel.

At a banquet Friday evening, Assistant Secretary Allen paraphrased President Eisenhower's assurances on Arab arms grants and said: "The United States has never given military assistance to a country which has used that [equipment] in an aggressive manner against its neighbor. I don't believe the United States ever will." But then, with what some in the audience thought a surprising cavalierness, he added: "There can always be a first time, I am perfectly aware of that."

Next morning Stephen P. Dorsey, Allen's Deputy Director for Near Eastern Affairs, read a lucid essay on "Social Discontent Among the Peasant and Working Classes." The discontent was vast and the progress to allay it was quite limited though ever "hopeful." Instead of indicating, if only in a phrase, that conditions were markedly more satisfactory in Israel, Mr. Dorsey referred the subject to a later speaker on the program. An absorbing, even brilliant, speech on "The Interaction of Education and Public Responsibility" by Dr. Alford Carleton, former president of Aleppo College in Syria, illustrated the classic approach of the old mission hand, the whimsical, patronizing, but essentially loving tone toward the Arab, a bumbling fellow who had so much to learn —from us especially—but was trying so hard and had to be given the benefit of every doubt.

Finally, summing up the two days of speeches, the conference *rapporteur*, my

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long-time friend Wendell Cleland, of the State Department, another ex-president of the American University in Cairo, pointed out that a cause of Middle Eastern instability was the fact that most of its states were successors to one empire or another, and hence have had to organize amid ruins. He shrugged off the Jewish state ("I haven't mentioned Israel because I don't know what it's a successor to and, in a sense, it's an import from Europe") and extenuated the Arab attitude ("Why should we accuse them of neutralism when we in the United States practiced neutralism for 175 years?"). In eleven solid hours of talk about the Middle East, only one person suggested that in the many internal differences and contrasts between Israel and the Arab countries the former, too, might be entitled once in a while to the slimmest benefit of a doubt.

THAT exception was the Institute's Jewish discussant for 1955: Don Peretz, ex-Ford Fellow, specialist in Palestine Arab refugee problems, and instructor at Hofstra College. He talked on "Public Responsibility: Its Progress and Prospects in Israel," and noted at least a few of the contrasts: in Israel "suffrage is universal—a characteristic not common in the area—and representative of all sectors of the population"; "if there is any Middle East nation where the government heeds public criticism . . . it is Israel"; "Israel's relatively high standard of living and numerous government services . . . make it one of the most progressive countries in the Middle East."

But even Mr. Peretz left much unsaid. He was, admittedly, in a tight spot. Here was a Jew proposing to defend Israel before an audience poised for attack. He proceeded with care, soothing his listeners at the outset with a mild joke, and disarming them further by suggesting smilingly that Israel in 1948 had had more public responsibility "per square head" than most other countries. Everybody sat back and relaxed. Mr. Peretz elaborated by showing how well the pre-Israel *Yishuv* had been organized and institutionalized.

But, in reviewing developments since statehood, he gave one spoonful of good to every two of bad. He spoke at length of the deterioration in morale due to the immigrant influx, of the problem of the Arab minority, of the economy's dependence on external aid, of the anti-social quirks of *kibbutz* socialism, of the low productivity of Israeli labor; but only briefly of the even distribution of wealth and opportunity in Israel, of the wide participation in national life, of the growth in public services. He spoke not at all of many other positive things, or of the improvement even in those criticized. Mr. Peretz may have deliberately refrained from saying more because he wanted to be persuasive. But the warm applause he got may have been due, in the main, to his courteous reluctance to disturb his listeners' preconceived views.

Curiously, it was a Turk, a Moslem Turk, who told the Institute's friends the one thing that above all needed telling. Kasim Gülek, a Turkish-style Adlai Stevenson, secretary-general of the opposition People's Republican party, which was voted out of power in 1950 after two decades, was charming and articulate, with an anti-stuffed shirt breeziness. He talked of the need for "public responsibility" in area defense. Slyly, he reminded his Arab listeners that Turkey had "lived" with the Arab countries for centuries. Well, he conceded to the laughter, "perhaps as a senior partner"—then, on reflection: "as a bigger brother." And hadn't the Turks given haven to the Jews since the Inquisition? "I was going through an exhibition of Hebrew manuscripts in the New York Public Library," he mused, "and I found one which said 'Begun in Spain, finished in Istanbul. . . .'" So he believed Turkey could speak as a friend of both sides in the "Israeli-Arab difficulty."

The Palestine refugee problem had to be solved, but could not be "within the means of the region—the Western world, especially America, must come in with material and moral help." As for defense, "uncompromising attitudes" must be scrapped. It is time everybody admitted that Israel is a "reality, a *fait accompli*." The Arab states must wake up to the fact that the danger is not in Israel but "from the North. . . . Organization against that danger must be the main job." "May I ask a question of my big brother?" said an Arab student brightly. "You Turks have your independence. Therefore you desire to defend it against Communism. But we in the Arab states still have to be convinced that imperialism and Zionism are less

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dangerous." "As a big brother to a little one," replied Kasim Bey, "let me tell you that there is only one danger. And while you quarrel among yourselves, the big danger grows." Besides, he added, a shade tartly but with a grin, "remember that Turkey not only defends herself but the line to the South. The little brothers ought to begin taking some responsibility. . . ."

The purpose of the Middle East Institute, according to a prospectus, is "to furnish Americans factual, unbiased information" and "to further understanding between Americans and the peoples of the Middle East." Except as to Israel, it seems fair to say these purposes had been advanced in some measure over the weekend. But how far is understanding between Americans and the peoples of the Middle East—or, for that matter, the American national interest in keeping the Middle East at peace—served by repeated assurances to the Arabs from many learned men that we as a nation sympathize altogether with them in the whole bill of complaint against Israel?

THAT evening, chairs still warm from two unrelenting days of Arab and pro-Arab pressure were occupied by representatives of American Zionism and of every major non-Zionist, pro-Israeli Jewish organization with the exception of the American Jewish Committee. Almost a year ago, led by Dr. Nahum Goldmann, head of the World Jewish Congress and the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the presidents of sixteen such groups had begun informal consultations on Israeli matters. Originally it had been proposed to convene in Washington with full delegations before the November elections, but this idea had been dropped as too open a pressure device. But now they were here. In a way, history was being made.

There was no banquet, no fund-raising, no anniversary to celebrate. Just an ordinary rainy Saturday in March, and Jewish Americans were pouring in from thirty-two states, to hear from their government and be heard by it on their anxieties concerning that government's policies. Secretary of State Dulles had been unable to accept an invitation because of business in the Far East. So there was Assistant Secretary Allen again, but with him this time was Philip M. Klutznick of B'nai B'rith—not the Afghan Ambassador—and Dr. Goldmann, hardy warhorse of a score of world Jewish campaigns.

The bizarre spectacle was then presented of an Assistant Secretary of State trapped in a packed hall while the Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine gave him a public lecture on the errors of American diplomacy. An effort was made to observe the amenities. Mr. Klutznick had already stressed that "we meet in the interest of America." Dr. Goldmann emphasized that "this is not a conference of protest but of deliberation, clarification, and calm counsel." He denied any difference between the Conference's and the government's long-range objectives in the Middle East, or that he had ever felt "the Republican administration is unfriendly toward Israel." "I will try not to use strong language tonight," he said. And then, improvising on the prepared text before him, interpolating side remarks and assaulting English grammar and syntax, he let fly.

To give the Arabs arms without getting anything in return was against American as well as Israeli interests. Why should the Arabs make any concession for peace if they could get what they wanted for nothing? There was one common feature to all the projects of American diplomacy for Middle Eastern defense: "Israel doesn't exist." This amounted to *de facto* withdrawal of recognition. With military pacts all around her, Israel was the only country without a single defense agreement or alliance. "How, in the opinion of the State Department, can Israel hope to maintain her position in such total isolation?" Military aid went to the Arabs while Israel received none. A policy of treating Israel as "an outcast and pariah" would harden Arab extremism and "must lead to ends Washington never intended."

"I regret the incident at Gaza, and I'm sure the leaders of Israel regret it too. But Israel in the last year has shown tremendous moderation [loud applause]. The American government and all the Western powers must make it clear that the Arabs must accept Israel as an equal partner in any security system." Goldmann begged "violently to disagree in all modesty" with a policy of one-sided concessions to the Arabs. "We are being told that this policy is now being reexamined. I am patient, and I urge you all to be patient. . . . The results of this review have long been overdue."

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GOLDMANN sat down after exactly one hour, and it was Mr. Allen's turn. In introducing him, Mr. Klutznick noted that he was in a difficult position. Less than two months in his post, he was invited to comment on a situation that could explode at a single careless word. From the Assistant Secretary's 500-word advance press release, which I had seen, it was clear that he had come determined to make no "basic or fundamental statement about American foreign policy." He reiterated this in his opening remarks. He was willing and ready to meet with a smaller group for freer discussion of questions which "obviously" could not be treated before such a large gathering. Though he had taken his oath of office six weeks ago, he felt "in listening to Dr. Goldmann that I was beginning my job tonight." He had come to learn "your views —you, my employers, the American people." He noted with satisfaction Dr. Goldmann's affirmation that current policies were not those of a particular administration. "I started under the Republicans, worked twenty years under the Democrats, and now I'm under the Republicans again. I am not a candidate for retirement, and I intend to continue to serve under any administration the American people choose. . . ."

Then, reading carefully from his release, he confirmed the fact that Dulles had been studying the Arab-Israel problem. "I cannot say when he would be in a position to make a statement, but I hope that a propitious occasion will arise soon." At this point Mr. Allen omitted a few sentences in his text, showing that he had attentively followed Goldmann's speech, which had attacked the argument that American arms for Arabs were pledged not to be used aggressively. Citing Arab threats, Dr. Goldmann had pointed out that governments like the Iraqi could be captured by fanatics but "arms once delivered are neither returned nor retrieved." Dexterously, therefore, Allen did *not* read: "The U.S. has not granted and will not grant military aid to any country which, in the government's opinion, is likely to use the aid in any aggressive manner. This applies specifically . . . to Iraq."

Thereafter, Mr. Allen hewed to generalities wide of the issue: the Soviet menace, the Middle Eastern defense gap, the importance of pacts. "I've made note tonight of many things I've heard, to carry away and keep in mind." He spoke feelingly of Point Four, the need for humanitarian aid to underprivileged areas of the world. He told the same story as the evening before about a well in an Indian village which had been a polluted mudhole for 1,000 years but now everyone was clamoring for the American experts to build them a sanitary and proper one. ("Allen drags that Indian well with him wherever he goes," a reporter muttered. "Heard him tell the yarn to the American Friends of the Middle East too.") He closed, to mild applause, by saying he was "delighted to have had the experience of being with you." He had heard words of wisdom and looked forward "to getting to know you better as I go on with my work."

I wandered from cluster to excited cluster after the session adjourned. Sample comments: "A disgraceful performance. He represents the government, and he didn't make one positive statement. . . ." "Nahum was wonderful. . . ." "It doesn't matter that Allen didn't say anything. The important thing is for Allen to know what American Jews say. . . ." "Where was Abba Hillel Silver? Allen couldn't have brushed *him* off. . . ." "This whole thing is a waste of time. . . ." "Now they know the Council for Judaism doesn't speak for the Jews of America. . . ."

Then I "crashed" a meeting of the Credentials and Steering Committee. It had registered 218 delegates by 10 P. M., although the airport had been closed out by zero visibility. Plans were laid for state groups on Monday to call on their Senators and Representatives. "The Council has been stuffing Congressmen's mailboxes with charges that we only represent an insignificant Zionist segment of Jewish opinion. They sent four mailings to the Hill. This has been widely publicized. Unless we get to see a lot of Congressmen, we will be just another conference with one more set of resolutions. . . ."

IN THE lobby on Sunday morning, I met a State Department friend, and, a few paces beyond, one of the Conference organizers. "This is a good thing for us," said the man from State. "We need to get more of this point of view. . . . Still, I wonder, isn't there *anyone* they could have put up who sounds less like a world Jew and more like

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an American than Dr. Goldmann? . . ." Said the Conference organizer: "Already it's a great success. Over 250 delegates in by 9 A. M. Not the usual group of notables calling on the State Department or White House. Or just Zionists. But grass-roots American Jewish leaders from all over. Many of them at their own expense. This morning we're discussing Israel's economics. Harold Stassen couldn't make it, but go and listen to the chief of his Middle East section in the Foreign Operations Administration. This afternoon Jack Jernagan [John D. Jernagan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] is coming over to make a real policy statement. He's even going to answer questions—written questions. . . ."

I asked someone I had seen at the Institute meeting, an American Jew who has written with distinction and scholarship about the Middle East, if he was attending the Conference. "No," he said, "I've had enough. Aren't you sick of all this parochialism? You know what would be useful? To get the Arabists into the Jewish meetings, and the Zionists into the meetings of the Institute, yes, even of the American Friends of the Middle East. It would do *all* of them some good. . . ."

In the Terrace Room, Hadassah's Rose Halprin presiding, Levi Eshkol was discussing economics. (The Israeli Finance Minister had found it necessary to come in person to settle a dispute raging over Henry Montor, whose resignation as director of Israel Bond sales he was shortly to accept.) After Mr. Eshkol came FOA's Norman Paul, who spoke glowingly of American participation in Israel's economic progress. (American technicians working in and with Israel are invariably more enthusiastic than American diplomats. Technicians, who deal with specific, physical problems, seem better able to appreciate the Israeli constructive zeal and competence, especially in contrast to the apathy they encounter in neighboring countries.) Mr. Paul offered to answer questions, and was given some rough ones, but did well, having no inhibitions or policy clearances to worry about. (Later I chatted with Paul, whom I had first met in Istanbul at an FOA regional meeting. "Did the questions bother you?" I asked. "No," he laughed. "I enjoyed them. Fine training for me when I go to Congress to argue for appropriations. . . .")

I saw two youths from Betar, the Revisionist Youth group, listening glumly to the speeches on economics. When the morning session started, they had handed around leaflets clamoring for a march across Jordan. (One of their insignia mounts a menorah rampant athwart a map of old Palestine. They had distributed pamphlets marked with it a few weeks ago at the Hotel Delmonico in New York, during a meeting of the American Friends of the Middle East!) Yosef Churba, aged twenty-one, of Brooklyn College and a Borough Park yeshiva, said: "Why do they waste a whole morning on economics? It's evading the issue! This conference was called to holler *gevalt* about *military* policy, wasn't it? Let them get on with it. . . ."

THE Conference schedule called for a lunch in the Blue Room to be addressed by Ambassador Abba Eban. Then, at two-thirty, the session was to be resumed in the Terrace Room to hear Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Jernagan and ask questions. This was to be a high point of the weekend in terms of a frank exchange between the State Department and American Jews. As things developed, however, the thing barely got off the ground, and then crashed with a p-f-f-t that may reverberate for a long time to come.

The material cause of the disaster was an epidemic of oratory. When organized Jews get together there must be a dais for all their leaders, and a dais inevitably inspires speeches. Before Ambassador Eban could make the one speech that was needed, three full-dress speeches had already been delivered—by three rabbis, Israel Goldstein of the American Jewish Congress, Maurice N. Eisendrath of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and Philip Bernstein of the American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs.

Each was a good speech, eloquent and solemn. The solemnity was somewhat marred by a strange preoccupation with the luncheon menu. It had been a dismal salmon plate, to meet the requirements of Orthodoxy. Conservative Rabbi Goldstein, seeking an opening gambit as any speaker will, noted that this meeting over which he had been invited to preside was the only one with a meal—"presumably to make my remarks

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palatable. . . ." This impelled Reform Rabbi Eisendrath, when his turn came, to call Goldstein to order for having "had the temerity to call this sumptuous repast palatable," and to pursue this profound theme for several minutes. This in turn moved Dr. Bernstein to discourse at some length on lox, shrimp, bagels, and cream cheese. (Mr. Jernagan, meanwhile, had arrived early in Rabbi Eisendrath's speech, on time—and been given a seat at the back of the hall.)

Aside from that, all three rabbis said in effect the same thing: that this great representative assemblage of American Jewry gave the lie to the insignificant number of Jews who denied and slandered Israel; that American citizens had the inalienable right to protest and criticism; that it was in the highest American interest for the State Department to redress its policy toward a sister democracy. The time consumed by all this made a shambles of the schedule, and of Jernagan's crucially important part in the program.

Ambassador Eban had one of his great moments. Mr. Eban is always a master of style and structure, but that day he was really memorable. He spoke of the links between American Jewry and Israel which "shine forth brightly burnished in this room." In seven short years we had moved from a world where the existence of Israel was inconceivable to an era in which "a world without Israel is inconceivable." He advised American Jewry not to be overly dejected in Israel's hour of danger, and he illuminated the many achievements of his country, and the ties binding to it all the earth except the territories next to it. Then, with diplomatic grace but formidable argument, he spoke of Israel's grievances against the Arab world, and her isolation, and her concern over policies jeopardizing her security. He was in every way superb and, as often before, he saved the day.

But not quite. Things had already gone too far. Through no fault of Mr. Eban's, it was 4 P. M. when he concluded. A Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, scheduled to be heard at 2:30, still sat obscurely at a rear table. It was decided not to move to the Terrace Room, and not to have questions. Mr. Jernagan was brought to the dais unnoticed. He was required to sit there through a reading of CIO and AFL denunciations of the American government's behavior. Then he was perfunctorily introduced. All this while people were streaming out of the room, presumably to catch planes and trains. Half the hall was empty when he rose to speak.

A tall man with a small voice, he could not be heard because nobody had thought of adjusting the microphone. There came cries of "louder." The microphone was inched up, and Jernagan hunched down, bending over a text that had been measured, certified, and cleared by half the State Department. It was a competent survey of the position from the administration's point of view. (It won the lead in the next day's New York *Times* account of the meeting.) But, except for conceding that Israel's pro-Westernism and military capacity made it "seem highly logical that Israel should be incorporated in a collective defense arrangement at an early date"—logical but "out of the question" because of Arab-Israel relations—Mr. Jernagan's speech betrayed no sign of adjustment to the spirit and temper of his audience.

Nor did he feel able to exercise the authority used the previous day by Assistant Secretary Allen, his chief, and omit points contested by the previous speaker. Eban had demolished the Arab argument that Israel threatened her neighbors, and the Washington argument that her neighbors had no hostile designs. But Jernagan stuck to his text like a drowning man. When he read that "Israel's neighbors are themselves afraid of aggression on the part of Israel," there were groans. When he read, "I do not see evidence of any intent on the part of her neighbors to attack Israel," there were hisses. There were hisses again, with a splatter of applause, as he faded to a conclusion.

Whatever the provocation, this seemed an extraordinary way to achieve one of the Conference's prime purposes, which was to gain the respect and attention, if not the good will, of the State Department. Unescorted, almost ignored, Mr. Jernagan was allowed to make his solitary way out of the hall and lose himself in the crowd. A few hours later, he quit Washington for a week's leave.

Other speeches followed, brief ones, by participating organizations not yet heard from. "I am sorry that Mr. Jernagan has left," declared Commander Joseph S. Barr, of the Jewish War Veterans. "When I

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heard him say that Israel does not face a threat of attack, some in the audience could barely stay in their seats. I was one of them. . . ." Then came the moving of the resolution: for American effort toward direct Israel-Arab negotiations; suspension of arms shipments in the absence of peace; inclusion of Israel in any regional defense system; continued economic assistance to Israel and the Arabs for better living standards; refugee settlement; and the strengthening of democratic institutions. It was carried unanimously.

Nahum Goldmann then spoke for eighteen more minutes. He summed up the Conference's achievements. He was not disappointed by the failure of the State Department representatives to go away "with a change of mind." It had been obvious, he declared, that no top official could commit himself at this juncture, when the entire policy was being reappraised. But Assistant Secretary Allen had at least given the first public intimation that such a reappraisal was under way. (Ten days after the Conference, Secretary Dulles, reaffirming that the Department was engaged in a reconsideration of the Arab-Israel security problem, indicated that incidents like the Gaza outbreak were delaying a decision.) "It was more important for us to say what we had to say to the administration than to listen to what they had to say to us," Dr. Goldmann went on. Great encouragement had been given to Israel "from her only reliable ally in the long run—the Jewish people." The large majority of American Jewry had given a "new demonstration of unity." The administration could no longer pretend that it did not know how American Jewry felt: "We have conveyed our position in an unmistakable, formal, and solemn way." He urged the delegates to go home "strengthened by this unprecedented conference. . . ."

UNPRECEDENTED it certainly was, and—who knows?—perhaps ultimately effective. But hardly formal and solemn, or even well-mannered. I heard one fervent Zionist exclaim, "Is this intelligent public relations? Is this sober political action? Most of America's top Jewish leaders were here. It could have been an impressive demonstration. Why did it have to be so crude? Why didn't we bring in some Senators and Congressmen? Why weren't the speeches short? Why was Jernagan, the representative of the government of the United States after all, practically insulted? And why weren't he and Allen allowed at least to speak first? This way, it was impossible for them to say anything. . . ."

Only future events will reveal whether the steamroller is a proper instrument for the achievement of reason and influence, and whether the Conference's clearly high objectives were truly supported by its method and behavior. A reporter can only record the fact that, on a brief visit of inquiry to the Department of State two days later, no glow of enthusiasm over the Conference was discernible. . . .

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UNIFYING PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE, AND PROPHECY

Moses Maimonides: The Man, His Work

LEO S. BAECK

THE 12th century was one of the richest periods in the history of the human spirit—in that age East and West met on the field of knowledge. For what has so often been doubted—and what Kipling, child of England and India, flatly denied ("Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet")—became a reality then: East and West came together in the world of learning and culture. The spirit found its paths, and on these Islam, Christianity, and Judaism met and spoke to each other.

Here in this western part of Europe, especially, the ground had been prepared. There was a new stirring here, a readiness for new ideas and new forms of life. . . . The Renaissance did not have to wait until the 15th century to begin.

Certainly, the age was medieval. It believed in its ultimate foundations, it had its fixed postulates and its established methods. But within these a ferment began, people began to think of other and earlier things, and to look around them. They began to care about writing a good Latin style, in the tradition of Cicero. . . . But the decisive thing in this period was that avenues were opened through which ideas and books from the East reached France and Germany. From the Arabic world, Greek philosophy and science came to the West, often by the way of the Jewish world. They entered above all under the mantle of Aristotle. This migration of Greek culture forms a curious chapter in the history of mankind.

WHEN Justinian closed the university at Athens in 520 C.E. and forbade the teaching of philosophy, he thought he had made an end to it. But there were still people left who philosophized. Teachers migrated to the East, to the countries of Islam, which had founded new states on the soil of the old Persian empire. It was one of the great events in the varied and ever renewed history of emigration. The men themselves—especially the first generation—did not become acclimated to their new surroundings. But they planted their ideas, their science and their teachings, and these took root. The reception of Greek philosophy and science by the Arab genius is one of the grandiose achievements in the history of the human spirit—under foreign skies, the Greek spirit enjoyed its second great age! Plato, Aristotle,

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LAST year was the 750th anniversary of Maimonides' death in 1204, and COMMENTARY published an essay by David Baumgardt in commemoration of the fact. In our editorial note, we remarked that the Rambam's significance, not alone for Judaism, but for the general enterprise of thought and religion, was such as to demand constant reappraisal of his ideas. And so at this short interval we publish another essay on him, this one too written as an act of commemoration of the 750th anniversary of his death. It was delivered as a lecture in the course of the ceremonies held in Maimonides' honor in the halls of the Nordhein-Westfalen Legislature in Düsseldorf on July 7, 1954. LEO S. BAECK hardly needs to be introduced to the readers of COMMENTARY. Former Chief Rabbi of Berlin and one of the most distinguished modern scholars of Judaism, Dr. Baeck, now in his eighties, divides his time today between England, the Continent, and the United States, notably at Hebrew Union College, where as resident scholar he has been an inspiration to students and teachers of that seminary. He survived Hitler and the war in Germany, and while in Theresienstadt concentration camp his guidance and example proved a rock of strength for thousands. Dr. Baeck is the author of many books, among which are *The Pharisees and Other Essays* and *The Essence of Judaism*. The present essay has been translated from the German by Irving Pfefferblit.

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and Plotinus, condemned or repudiated in Greece, were now taught in Arabic, in Arab countries, and commented on by Arab thinkers. Greece lived again in Baghdad and all the other cultural centers of the great Mohammedan world that stretched to the Atlantic.

The Jewish people, too, owe a debt of gratitude to the Arab world for this. Thanks to the Arab masters, Greek philosophy, which once before, in the generation after Alexander the Great—the so-called Hellenistic age—had joined itself to Jewish thought, now pervaded it once again. The great age of Jewish philosophy began.

And in their own way the Jews showed their gratitude for this. What they received they always passed on. They became the great translators: in the Mohammedan countries they translated the Greek philosophers, astronomers, doctors, and mathematicians from Arabic into Hebrew; and from the Hebrew they were translated into Latin. . . . These Jewish translators helped clear the way—one of those historically circuitous ways—by which Greek learning reached the West and brought new thought, new aspirations to the universities of the West.

In a relatively short time Greek and Arab philosophy were at home in the two great, and closely connected, universities of Paris and Cologne. Thus it was that only a few decades after the death of the man we are concerned with here, Moses ben Maimon, his philosophic masterpiece could be discussed in the auditoriums of Paris and Cologne, and find a place, first in the books of Alexander of Hales, and of William of Auvergne, the great teacher of Paris, and then in the works of the three great Dominicans at Cologne: Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and Meister Eckhart. This, too, was a result of the proto-Renaissance of the 12th century, and its vital receptivity.

In the life of Moses Maimonides, the same great openness, the same unfailing receptivity is evident. Fate itself, which ordained that his student years should be passed amid constantly changing surroundings, opened doors in his being. This helped to make him a man of independent mind.

Yet Maimonides' life began in security, inside the Spanish homeland of Jewry and the Spanish sphere of Arab culture—twin realms of growth and flowering. He was born in March 1135, in Cordova, a city whose spiritual life was both Arab and Jewish. Arabic became his mother tongue, and remained the decisive language of his literary activity. In the distinguished, cultivated Jewish community of Cordova, as in all other Jewish communities, Hebrew was the language of the Bible and of religious service. But here, in southern Spain, it had also been wonderfully enriched and deepened by poets and thinkers. So Hebrew, too, became the language of this man, a language he endowed with new traits.

His father, Maimon ben Joseph, was *dayan*, judge, in the Jewish community. So he grew up in an atmosphere of jurisprudence and respect for the Jewish law. And thus this law could become the content and the mission of his life. In the Spain of that day, Jewish philosophy had discovered itself in ever increasing measure, and had become, in both its Platonic and its Aristotelian tendencies, a staple part of education. So it was possible for philosophy, too, to be a force in this man from the very beginning.

These two things, law and philosophy—using the last word in its most general sense—have been important elements of Jewish culture since ancient times. In a certain sense it was through law that, in the course of centuries, Jewish culture had created itself. In the Torah and the Talmud, and in the extensive literature that had grown up around them, a will to law had been given expression. Giving and taking, it kept the spirit alive. And the impulse to philosophy has always been a Jewish characteristic, too. It is significant that the first Greek to mention the Jews, Theophrastus, first the pupil and then the successor of Aristotle, said that they were *philosophoi to genos*, philosophers by birth, a philosophic race; and that his contemporary, Megasthenes, ambassador of the Seleucidian kingdom to an Indian court,

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said that what the Brahmins were in India —the philosophers of the country—the Jews were in the Near Eastern world. The philosophic bent, the constant asking of questions, the seeking for principles, connections, and analogies, everything that is summed up in Biblical commentary by the Talmudic notion of *haggadah* has indeed always been part of the essence of Judaism. Maimonides, by virtue of his Cordovan family, was thus born to philosophy as well as to Jewish law.

But there was another, a third component of Jewish existence, almost a part of its historic essence, that he experienced early: the Jewish fate, the Jewish affliction, Jewish homelessness. When he was thirteen years old Cordova was conquered by the Almohades. The Almohades, the "Unitarians," were the men of a puritanical movement such as has often blazed up inside Islam; a rebellion—for Islam has never known revolutions, only rebellions—of the desert against the city, of asceticism against culture, of narrow faith against broadness of outlook, of the Koran against the making of many books. Similar movements produced the Wahabites of Arabia in the 18th century, the Mahdi of the Sudan in the second half of the 19th, and in more recent times Ibn Saud, who created the Kingdom of Arabia.

In their rapid advance the Almohades had already subjugated a large part of North Africa. Now they pressed forward into Arab Spain and captured Cordova, the seat of the Emirate. Here, too, they proclaimed their harsh doctrine, which included the rejection of everything foreign and of all foreigners—and a foreigner for them was simply anyone of different belief. One could write a history of civilization based on the meaning that has been given the word "foreigner" at different times. In this case religion was the criterion: the "foreigner" had the choice between accepting Islam and leaving the country. Many adopted the first alternative, at least outwardly. Things were made easy for them; there was no Inquisition to keep watch on the steadfastness of the converts. Others left the country, among them the *dayan* Maimon ben Joseph and his family. The *jus emigrandi*, the right to emigrate, as it was later codified for Central Europe in the Treaty of Westphalia, was here the general practice. For years the family maintained itself, as if amid familiar unfamiliarity, now here, now there, in southern Spain and then in Morocco, until there too, eventually—the rabbi of Fez died a martyr—the ground became unsafe. At last they reached Egypt by way of Palestine, and in 1165 settled down in old Cairo, in Fostat, which became their final home.

Egypt at that time was enjoying a renaissance. The great Sultan Saladin, who had made himself master of Syria and Egypt and dislodged the Crusaders from Palestine, was almost the man Lessing depicted him as in his *Nathan the Wise*. A liberal spirit prevailed, the economy flourished, knowledge was cultivated. Here the refugees could resume their old lives.

But Maimon ben Joseph soon died, and shadows fell over his house once more. His younger son, David, in order to support himself and his brother Moses—who had chosen a life of study—had started a jewelry business; he was shipwrecked on a business voyage, and drowned. The family fortune was lost with him. It was a difficult time, especially since Moses had to struggle with sickness. He says nothing of all this; it would have been out of keeping with this man, who always went his way quietly.

He had now entered his thirties, and it was time for him to establish a place for himself in life. During the years of wandering he had taken up the study of medicine. We can imagine how he sought out masters of the art wherever time and opportunity offered. Now he saw his vocation before him and became a master himself. Soon after he started practice in Cairo his reputation began to spread. Within a short time he was one of the recognized and sought-after physicians of Egypt. He became one of the Sultan Saladin's physicians, the personal physician of Saladin's son, and of the vizier, too.

In a letter written in later years he describes the strain to which his calling sub-

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jected him, how on many evenings he sank down almost exhausted. At the same time medicine meant for him an unending study, an inexhaustible scientific task. The results he set down in a series of scientific treatises that spread his reputation and his fame far and wide. To mention a few, he wrote a book on poisons and one on diet, a treatise on sexual hygiene—this, at the request of a sultan, and it is bold in its admonishments and warnings. Finally and most important, he wrote a handbook of medicine entitled Medical Aphorisms, which was quickly translated into Latin and referred to as an authority. The book was often cited with the words "Rabbi Moses *dixit*"—Rabbi Moses has said.

But all the while two other tasks remained alive for his spirit: the law, as his family inheritance, and philosophy, as the inheritance of his old Spanish homeland. These three—natural science, law, and philosophy—giving and taking from each other, shaped his mind. The law taught him respect for the form; philosophy, respect for the idea; and now natural science, respect for the fact. This threefold respect, which is at bottom only one, remained always in this man as a living force. These three guided his capacities and his powerful will toward the goal of his labors.

He had already begun a work on jurisprudence when he was twenty-three; a commentary on the Mishnah in Arabic that was immediately translated into Hebrew. It was published in Cairo in 1168. With this work alone Maimonides would have won an enduring place in the history of Jewish thought.

For fifteen hundred years the science of the Law had been, in increasing measure, an essential part of Jewish spiritual life. The consciousness of the unity of the Law obviously contributed to the unity of faith. On the basis of the prescriptions set forth in the Pentateuch there had grown up in Palestine in the course of time a "common law" with authorities, precedents, and traditions. Preserving its traditional, oral character, it was called the Oral Doctrine. Only relatively late, around the year 200 C.E., when external circumstances made this seem advisable, was it set down in writing by authoritative teachers of the day and dubbed the Mishnah, or Codification.

But the study and interpretation of the Law continued as before in Palestine, and now, too, in the Babylonian schools and courts of Jewish law. The results were again handed down orally until finally, once more in obedience to the times, they were put down in writing around 350 in Palestine, and some one hundred fifty years later in Babylon. This new codification was called the Gemara, which, with the Mishnah, made up the Talmud. But the Mishnah remained the classic foundation.

In the century before Maimonides, Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, called Rashi, of Troyes in the Champagne, later identified with Worms by years of study and teaching, had written a commentary on the Talmud which became and has remained *the* commentary, and which indeed could hardly be duplicated. Rashi is the great pedagogue in whose hands everything becomes clarity. He had a genius for seeing what might be misunderstood or not understood at all, and a wonderful gift for the explanation, the surmounting, of difficulties. The task he set himself, and which he accomplished in his own straightforward style, was that of pointing the way everywhere. So he became the great helper, the father of all students.

When Maimonides, in his turn, undertook to write a commentary on the basic book of the Talmud, the Mishnah, he had a different goal in mind from Rashi. He was thinking not so much, as Rashi had done, of the student as of the teacher. It was the teacher at whose side he wished to stand, the teacher he wished to guide. Of course, he too wanted to explain, he too cared about details—the way to the whole lies only through every detail. But he was concerned first of all with the whole in which the details cohered, and which gave them their meaning. And so he started from principles and moved always toward general laws. His forte was the

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systematic. The philosophic impulse was in him. His feeling was for the idea, for the whole, that preceded, that included the parts.

Reading Maimonides' commentary, one is struck over and over again by the extent to which it points beyond itself. The whole of the Talmud, the whole of the Law, seems to stand in the background, asking to be organized and systematically presented. And so inner necessity led him to a second, greater work. For twelve years he devoted his genius and energy, in the time left him by his professional duties, to this task. In 1180 the book appeared, divided into fourteen sections and called *Mishneh Torah,* Code of the Torah, the old name for Deuteronomy. It was written in Hebrew—independent in this too, Moses ben Maimon had created a characteristic Hebrew style of his own. Rashi's style in the West, and Maimonides' in the East, were two new creations of the Jewish Middle Ages. Written in Hebrew, the language accessible to all Jews, the *Mishneh Torah* was immediately available to the whole Jewish world, to all those who sought the Law in it. Thus it served the unity of the Law over an area covering the three continents of the Old World.

Of the work itself one can speak only in terms of wonder, even of astonishment. With infinite patience—all genius is at bottom infinite patience, too—with an indomitable industry that was never satisfied with the merely provisional, with a dynamic tension that never left off shaping what was begun, what was once conceived, until it was finished, until it was really brought to a conclusion, this man, the busy physician, dared to undertake this work and never abandoned it until he had brought it to completion. An almost infinite mass of material, sometimes coherent, sometimes chaotic, is surveyed, gathered and mastered, absorbed and ordered. And it is all shaped into unity by an incomparable architectonic art; into a self-contained structure whose every individual part supports and sets off the other. Everything in the Jewish spirit that in the course of centuries had sought legal expression was here given due place and importance. The sense of fact, of the individual instance, which was the constructive element; the feeling for form, which was the binding force; and the understanding of the idea, which gave unity to the whole—all these united in the creation of this work.

BESIDES the great and abiding achievement that the *Mishneh Torah* represents as a work of learning, it is important in an eminently practical sense. It helped to consolidate the legal structure of the Jewish community. And, because it presented the foundations and logical connections of the Law, it also, to some extent, created law. It is, in this sense, a creative achievement not to be underestimated.

The Jewish communities of Europe, Africa, and Asia differed from each other in political, social, and economic respects. But they had a common structure and were all more or less similarly constituted. Each of them governed itself and thus, in spite of the numerous limitations under which most of them had to live, enjoyed internal autonomy. They were like little republics. They had—as Franz Delitsch stressed in his study of the widespread Jewish poetic activity of that period—freedom amid oppression. Like all genuine autonomy, theirs was based on a living and uniform system of law that was marked by strongly social characteristics. These Jewish communities had a legal organization, a legal security, and a legal stability that the world around them, seemingly so much stronger, had for the most part not yet attained.

This legal continuity was all the more notable because these communities lacked executive powers of their own. They presented the unusual historical picture of a judiciary without an executive organ. The last resort, seldom invoked and very seldom misused, to enforce a decision against recalcitrants was excommunication, the severing of all relations. Excommunication in this case was not so much ecclesiastical as legal in character. The authority of the judge was essentially moral, and buttressed by a living tradition. The bond between personality and

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law, between the judge and the law he administered, was unbroken, and prevailed even under handicaps. It meant more than the possession of executive powers.

These were the circumstances in which Maimonides undertook his codification of the whole of Jewish law. No authority had sanctioned or authorized the work, and there was no authority that could have done so. It was possible to oppose Maimonides' codification, and this was promptly done by Rabbi Abraham ben David of Posquières, who at times could be very temperamental in his attacks. But this only lent breadth and vitality to the book's effect. It very quickly won an unquestioned place, as every combination of learning, penetration, and integrity must. Its author became and remained an authority by force of his own stature. To generations of judges and students, his work served at once as an aid and a model, a support and a spur. Those who opposed him would have been forgotten without him.

It is impressive to trace his influence in the extensive legal literature of subsequent centuries. "The Rambam"—the anagrammatic abbreviation of Rabbi Moses ben Maimon—"the Rambam said"—that phrase gave a statement more validity than could the sanction of any temporal or spiritual authority.

The book has, moreover, a special historical place because of its philosophic precision. Here law is not something that exists in and for itself. It is the expression of a philosophy, an attitude toward life and the world. It is significant that the theme of the first part of the book, which serves as introduction, is the question of knowledge: its intention is to demonstrate the methods and limits of knowledge. Not only the scholar but the thinker speaks here. It is interesting to compare the *Mishneh Torah* with another book, the *Shulchan Aruch,* in which almost four hundred years after Maimonides another refugee from Spain, the mystic Joseph Karo, made a new codification of Jewish law. His work, too, though for practical reasons more limited in scope, is an extraordinary achievement and had great historical importance, but it is devoid of philosophy. The comparison of the two books stimulates reflection. Judaism cannot express itself, in all its individuality and in its deepest religious feelings, without both law and philosophy. In allusion to two ancient concepts, one might say that Judaism can afford to suppress neither its Halachah nor its Haggadah.

As the commentary on the Mishnah led psychologically and logically to the *Mishneh Torah,* so the latter led to Maimonides' third great work, which was a philosophic one. This was written in Arabic, but is better known by the title given to its translation into classic Hebrew: *Moreh Nebuchim,* Guide for the Perplexed. In the Latin into which the book was promptly translated it was known as *Doctor Perplexorum* or *Dux Perplexorum.*

The three works form, in a higher sense, one. They are one not only for the personal reason that their author was a man of natural science, of law, and of philosophy, but also from the objective point of view. The principles of law support philosophy, and the principles of philosophy support law. They do this on the basis of knowledge, and for its sake.

But all this knowledge of life and of the conduct of life is sustained and enclosed by the world of religion. And religion—on this the Jew, the Christian, and the Mohammedan were in agreement—was revealed religion, it was knowledge transmitted from another sphere, that of the prophetic. Here an inescapable problem arose, one that had to be faced again and again. Where were the boundaries of the knowledge vouchsafed by science, and where did the knowledge granted by religion, by faith, begin? And this problem contained another problem—that of the mystery.

For science, mystery is a limiting concept; as Aristotle says, science has to "come to a halt" somewhere. But, for religion, mystery is the core, and out of mystery comes revelation. Infinity and eternity, which are at bottom one and the same thing, constitute for

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science a question that here and there becomes unavoidable. For religion they are the components of the mystery that sustains. It is significant that the Hebrew word *olam*, which means both "eternity" and "infinity," includes the meaning of "mystery" in its root. What is the "infinite-eternal"? Is it God alone, is it the spirit that proceeds from God, that creates and orders and shapes? Or is it substance, too, as Plato and Aristotle, whose philosophy triumphed in the world of Mohammedan, Jewish, and Christian thought, had taught? Whose was the ultimate answer here? Or were there two answers? Were the answers given by faith and by science each ultimate in its own way, in its own sphere? This was the uncertainty, the perplexity out of which the *Moreh Nebuchim* was intended to lead.

In order to point the way, the work seeks first of all to set down what is certain in the midst of doubt. One certainty, for Maimonides, is the fact of prophecy: the psychological and historical fact that knowledge, above all knowledge of a moral nature, to which no spirit of investigation and no sagacity could have attained, was immediately and completely revealed in prophecy. In the Prophets, among whom Moses has a special place, powers of creative intellect operated that were unequaled even by those of the great thinkers. Therefore—and this is a further fact—more is contained in the words of prophecy preserved in the Bible than their merely literal meaning; these words require therefore a special and characteristic process of elucidation. This elucidation never comes to an end; increased knowledge—and this is another fact—leads to new or deeper insight. And there is no end to knowledge. As it is put in an epigrammatic sentence in the second book of the *Moreh*, "The gates of inquiry are never closed." Man may be sure of the truths of religion but he must not on that account feel himself to be the *beatus possidens*, their happy possessor. Philosophy is viewed as an ever renewed stimulus, and in this sense Maimonides' doctrine might be characterized as a Biblical philosophy.

MAIMONIDES seeks to demonstrate the certainty of this position by exhaustive proofs, partly with the help of Aristotle, partly against him. What separates him from Aristotle is, above all, the doctrine of God. For Aristotle, God is the supreme, unmoving spirit, and the world is as eternal as God. It proceeds from God, as the Arab expounders of Aristotle, influenced by Neo-Platonism, explained, by an eternal process of necessity. God is unmoved and the upper spheres strive towards him, which causes their motion. The supreme being causes motion, as a sentence in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* has it, *"kinei de hos eromenon"*—in that it is loved; this is that love of which the last words of Dante's *Divine Comedy* speak, "which moves the sun and the other stars."

But this wonderful picture drawn by Aristotle cannot, Maimonides now seeks to prove, stand fast against the reality of cosmic motion, against the multiplicity, both known and suspected, of the universe. The existent, in the fullness of its forms, postulates an act of creation. Even if matter were eternal, an act of creation would be necessary to explain movement, and the eternity of matter can never be strictly demonstrated. And the Aristotelian universe offers equally little ground for the moral cosmos, for the great and abiding tasks of mankind, for the Messianic goal and the Messianic ideal. Only the God of prayer, the God of revelation, can justify these. The world around us and in us and over us, Maimonides seeks to show, retains its meaning and its reason only through the God of the Bible, the God of Creation, the God of Revelation. What the Prophets saw and proclaimed is the one truth in which all new knowledge, all new perception is enclosed.

This is the way the *Moreh Nebuchim* points. Here Maimonides, with immense dialectical and critical power, with discrimination and logical rigor, with his sure ability to detect and pursue problems, and with a special gift for translating metaphysical questions into psychological terms, not only marked off boundaries but opened horizons. He really became a guide. Here the pro-

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found problem that is the characteristic Jewish religious problem, and from which all questions and claims arise, is grasped: the problem of the entrance of the eternal, the infinite, the mysterious, the unconditioned, the imperious, into this world of the finite, the limited, the earthly, the natural, and the perceptible: the problem of Creation and Revelation. In the language and methods of his time, and within their scientific limits, Maimonides grasped and demonstrated the problem. But he conceived it in its essential and decisive, and thus in its enduring, form.

And, what is most significant, he held fast to the unity of the problem. He rejected the fateful evasion attempted by another son of Cordova, his contemporary, Ibn Roshd, whom the Latin world called Averroes—whose consequences can be traced as far as Hegel—to the effect that there were two truths, one for science and one for religion, one for the rich and the other for the poor in spirit. It was largely owing to Miamonides that this doctrine remained foreign to Judaism. For him the truth was one, one and the same in faith and in knowledge, one and the same in the world of Revelation and the world of Creation. The unity of the spiritual life, and therefore of the human task and the human hope, too, was thereby fostered as well as authenticated.

As we have said, not only Maimonides' medical writings but his *Moreh* entered the Christian world. The Scholastics were, like him, deeply influenced by Aristotle, the "master of those that know," as Dante calls him, and had to come to terms with him. In doing so they followed the *Moreh Nebuchim* in important questions, especially those of the Creation, Revelation, prophecy, and the doctrines of reason, and of the eternity of matter.

The influence of medieval Jewish philosophy on the Scholastics can be traced through two lines of descent. One had its origin in the great synagogal poet, Solomon ibn Gabirol, called in Latin Avioebron. His philosophic work in Arabic, *M'kor Chayim,* The Well of Life, was very quickly translated into Latin, and at times regarded as the work of a Christian. This book, entitled *Fons Vitae* in Latin, especially influenced Franciscan thinkers. The other source of influence was the *Moreh Nebuchim,* which primarily affected the Dominicans. We can trace its influence clearly from Alexander of Hales, the master of Paris, and William of Auvergne, the Bishop of Paris, down to the three great thinkers whose names are linked with Cologne, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and Meister Eckhart. The works of these three—in the case of Meister Eckhart, his still largely unpublished Latin writings—abound in references to the thoughts and opinions of "Rabbi Moses Aegyptius," as he was generally called. And the line of influence reaches through the great cardinal of the Moselle, Nicolaus Cusanus, especially in his doctrine of the unknowability of God, to the French jurist, Jean Bodin, and down to Leibnitz and his "theodicy"—Leibnitz copied out extracts from the *Moreh.* Thus Maimonides' place in European culture transcended by far the bounds of the Jewish community.

With the *Moreh Nebuchim,* his life work was completed. The idea that guided him all his life, summoning him to show through his Judaism how living religion opened the way to a higher world—this idea never abandoned him because he never abandoned it. He served it all his life, seeking to give it ever renewed expression. Now the task was finished. But the work of his days was not finished till the very last. He had, without wishing to, become the leader of the Jews of Egypt, and the Sultan recognized him as that. Beyond that he had become *the* authority for the Jews of every country. Legal inquiries came to him from everywhere.

The Jewish world had no real channels of appeal for legal questions; a man's personal authority made him the ultimate arbiter by common consent. This is attested by the abundant literature of legal opinion. There were no national boundaries in this process. We know of an inquiry addressed

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to Rashi from a Jewish community on the Caspian Sea. The great unity as well as the freedom of Jewish law are evident in this. So Maimonides' word now became the ultimate authority; Fostat in Egypt became a kind of center of the Jewish world, as once Mainz had been, and then Worms and Troyes. This new duty, too, was voluntarily assumed by Maimonides, and we can judge the size of his task by the great number of his *responsa* that we still possess.

These, too, are characteristic of the man. For him each question meant more than a mere individual case, with its difficulties, its complications, and its intricacies—a man stood before him, a man with his own needs and concerns, his own pain and hope. These legal opinions add an essential trait to our picture of the man, the physician, the jurist, and the philosopher; just as the open letters he had already, on his own initiative, begun to send in earlier years to communities threatened by oppression and insecurity in order to teach them, to guide them and, not least of all, to comfort them, are an essential part of his whole life and character. He was the man whose course never wavered. He was always himself.

Thus his was a life fulfilled when his days came to an end. He died in December 1204, and was buried in the Holy Land, in Tiberias on the Lake of Gennesaret.

MOSES BEN MAIMON cannot be thought of outside the Jewish world. He became a part of history almost in his own lifetime, and he has remained an essential element in Jewish history. His thought became one of the poles around which Jewish history revolved for a long time. It is part of the significance of the man that his thoughts were rejected by many before they were even understood.

Soon after his death there arose in the Southern French communities where Maimonides' philosophy had found some of its earliest disciples a reaction against the *Moreh*. A group of zealots felt itself called upon to defend what it considered Jewish orthodoxy. It was the time of the Crusades against the Albigensians in Southern France. This group felt the need for a crusade of its own, and set up inquisitional courts against the *Moreh* and its adherents.

Minorities live in the atmosphere of the majority, whether for good or for bad. This is a lesson Jews have had cause to learn. In the Talmud itself certain people are addressed in these terms: "Like the evil among the others have you dealt, like the good among them you have not dealt." And Jewish history very soon left this episode, too, of the "orthodox" tribunals against the *Moreh*, behind.

Opposition and criticism have always been granted wide range in Judaism. Abraham ben David of Posquières wrote "Marginal Notes" on the *Mishneh Torah*, often attacking it with all the fieriness that belonged to the temper of his Southern French home, but later generations recognized his work as an enrichment. His critique became an accepted part of tradition, and as the scribes and then the printers continued to bring out new editions of the *Mishneh Torah* they almost never failed to include these "Marginal Notes." The great man and his opponent were presented together. The same thing was done in Lorraine when the scholars of the generations after Rashi produced their critical additions, the *tosaphot*, to the master's Talmudic commentary. They stand beside each other, as if inseparable, in the printed and handwritten manuscripts: Rashi and the men of the *tosaphot*. The greatness of Maimonides, like that of Rashi, seemed not only to endure criticism but to demand it. The stature of the man was only increased thereby.

ALMOST from the beginning, the greatness of Rabbi Moses ben Maimon was sensed in the popular mind. The simple Jew felt a uniqueness here, a rare mixture of spiritual strength and humanity, even if he was unable to grasp its defining characteristics. Very early the saying arose among the people: "From Moses—the prophet—to Moses—the son of Maimon—there was none like Moses—like Moses ben Maimon." The great

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reverence spoke here, the grateful love, without which a people, especially the Jewish people, cannot find itself.

In this, the work as well as the personality of the man revealed itself as a force for unity. Personalities that inspire and create unity are a vital factor to the Jewish people. Throughout almost its entire history, Jewish life has taken the form, not of a circle with a single center, but of an ellipse with two foci. In ancient times these two foci were the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom; then Palestine and the Hellenistic world, the Jewish homeland and Babylon; in the Middle Ages, the territory of the Jews of Germany, the Ashkenazim, and that of the Iberian Jews, the Sephardim; and now, as is beginning to appear in outline, Israel and the communities of the Dispersion. These differences, which sometimes became contradictions, called for unifying forces, and above all for personalities in whom the Jewish people could find an image of unity. This task Maimonides accomplished for his own age and for long ages afterward. In him the Jewish East and the Jewish West saw themselves as a unity. This, too, and not least of all, is his great historical significance.

To the historical must be added the moral, for the historical is based on the moral. Maimonides became, wherever he was known and understood, a voice of conscience. He was like an admonition to that reverential thought which never loses itself, because it is concerned with the essential, with the idea; to that integrity of thought without which there is no true knowledge; to that seriousness and dedication of thought which does not make things easy for itself or play false with its task by superficiality or approximation; to that humility of thought which is always conscious of how much remains to be done; to that veracity of thought without which all knowledge and all sharpness of wit remain meaningless. Whoever came near him in spirit heard this appeal to conscience, this call to live in knowledge, and to be devout in knowledge for the sake of life, and to be a free man for the sake of life and knowledge—to be the slave to no ambition, as to no man.

Plain people sensed something of this, as we have said, whenever they thought or spoke of the man. Let one example serve for many here, because it is a homely example, not meant even for company, let alone the world. Among the personal effects of Ferdinand Lassalle, the great labor leader [of Germany in the 19th century] . . . was found a letter that he carried on him. His grandfather, a merchant of Loslau in Upper Silesia, had written it to his son, who had left home to study. In this letter, written in 1802, he tells his son, Ferdinand Lassalle's father: "Do not think that you are educated and need to learn nothing more, for the Rabbi Hamoreh—the rabbi who wrote the *Moreh Nebuchim*—says: 'If you think you are learned then you are ignorant.'" So did the people think and speak of this man, of Moses ben Maimon.

This man created much and brought much to completion. But present in everything he did was himself, his own personality. This self of his, this personality, was not the least of his works. He was an individualist, as Jew and as thinker, to the end of his days. The father of modern medicine, Paracelsus—like Maimonides, a physician and a philosopher, though lacking the sure sense for conceptual form that Maimonides had learned from jurisprudence—once defined the human task: *"Non sit alterius, qui suus esse potest"*: he who can be himself, let him not be another. This, Maimonides made the reality of his life: to live for others and yet be himself.

This was the man, Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, the Rambam. To remember him is to ask ourselves a question that concerns us all.

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FALL OF MENDES-FRANCE'S "MINISTRY OF HOPE"

Where Does French Democracy Go from Here?

HERBERT LUETHY

"WE WILL outlive Mendès-France," vowed the distillers of Normandy, Maine, and Artois at their convention in Louviers on January 20. It wasn't a hard prophecy to make—the distillers of France will survive anything, even a Second Flood, and besides, by that time you could read it in black and white in every hole-in-the-wall paper around the country that Mendès-France's days were numbered.

He had already outlived his own temperance campaign. Its most spectacular part, launched with such fanfare a few weeks earlier as accompaniment to the American trip of "Mr. France," had been junked in the late hours of New Year's Eve. So quietly that hardly anyone noticed it, ten minutes before adjourning the 1954 session, the president of the National Assembly hurriedly mumbled off eight decrees signed by Premier Mendès-France and three of his ministers. The bill "to prohibit the consumption of certain beverages in public places at certain hours" was withdrawn, as were the bills to control the manufacture, repair, and sale of distilling equipment, to regulate brandy production, to combat public drunkenness, to provide for the policing of taverns and bars, to tax and restrict advertising of apéritifs and spirits, to establish conditions for licensing new drinking places, and to restrict the alcoholic content of certain beverages. Thus did a few more stillborn reform projects enrich the archives of the National Assembly. The parliamentary term for it is "ballast" dumping.

SO MANY of the highly touted projects of the Mendès-France era had met that fate that when the inevitable government crisis came along no one was quite sure what the shouting was all about. The crisis became a distasteful affair involving personal rancor, with public issues serving as a mere pretext. The no-confidence vote on North Africa was a long-planned lynching party, complete with the fever of noose-tying and a prearranged ambush. The air in the unventilated Palais Bourbon became hotter and stickier than ever. "Tonight or never!" was the way Teitgen, chairman of the Popular Republican deputies, and head of the Christian Democratic family dynasty, goaded his vaguely conscience-stricken followers.

"Tonight" the North African policy of the Mendès-France government was up for discussion. Its stated aims embodied that policy of "free association" which the Popular Republicans themselves had called for at countless conventions, and once, in Robert Schumann's days, had even tried to carry out. In all its disjointedness—limited good will towards Tunisia, hopeless and stubborn continuance of terror in Morocco, and classi-

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THE fall of Mendès-France as French Premier, after all the hopes raised by him both in France and abroad, is one more symptom of the Fourth Republic's inability to find a parliamentary regime stable enough even to begin the task of postwar economic reconstruction, much less that of solving her long-standing external problems. Instead we have, as HERBERT LUETHY shows us here, and has shown us before (in "France's New Parochial Nationalism" in our May 1954 number) a seemingly permanent stabilization of ineffective parliamentary government. Mr. Luethy, a frequent contributor, last appeared in our pages in November of the past year with "European Union Refuses to Stay Buried." He was born in Basel, Switzerland, in 1918, and educated at the University of Zurich. His interests extend to literature and economics as well as contemporary politics; recently, he published a book on France. This article has been translated from the German by E. B. Ashton.

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cal military "pacification" in Algeria—this program epitomized every rotten compromise between liberalism and colonialism that had characterized France's North African policy for a decade. The six-months-old "Tunisian experiment," which was begun so boldly and hopefully with Mendès-France's sensational reconciliation trip to Tunis, only to bog down in endless haggling, had come to resemble more and more the similar "experiment" in 1951. This time, however, the consequences of failure would be worse.

The general assault on Mendès-France's Tunisian policy was unleashed by the same "colonial lobby" that three years before put an end to the first experiment with Tunisian autonomy and brought North Africa to the verge of civil war. But this made no difference. The debate in the Chamber of Deputies may have been over North Africa, but the stakes in corridors and caucus rooms were beet sugar, the Paris Agreements, cabinet portfolios, and revenge for what Mendès-France had done to Bidault.

NO CONFLICT, Montaigne said once, is more bitter than Christian conflict, and no hatred is more implacable than that of the righteous caught out. The spokesmen of the "colonial lobby" accused Mendès-France and his ministers of conspiring with North African nationalists and Soviet agents, but at the same time M. Fonlupt-Espéraber, an old Christian Democratic fighter against colonial police rule, unblushingly reproached the same government for crowded jails, military brutality, and "Gestapo methods" in North Africa. As if these ancient traditions of colonial rule had not flourished during the ten years in which the Christian Democrats had had full or partial responsibility for French policy in North Africa.

The *coup de grâce* to Mendès-France was administered by René Mayer, Algerian wheat tycoon and deputy for Constantine who belongs to the same party as the Premier and at the same time happens to be his pet aversion. (Mendès-France had played cat-and-mouse with Mayer for months by offering him the Foreign Ministry a dozen times.) "I don't know where you're going," Mayer was now able to say. "A series of contradictions does not make a policy." And Mendès-France commented: "That was the donkey's kick" (meaning that now that the lion was dying the donkey could kick him to death with impunity).

The victors were able really to enjoy their triumph only when the fallen Premier's phenomenal self-esteem led him to flout every rule and tradition by returning to the rostrum after the announcement of the no-confidence vote to proclaim—"so it may be heard not only here but outside"—that his work would live on, that the nation would "not forget the hopes we revived," nor "forsake truth now that it has had a taste of it." This violation of French parliamentary ritual by the ambushed victim provoked scenes of hysteria similar to those of August 30, 1954, after the defeat of EDC. Old putschists of the extreme right who had once marched on the Palais Bourbon with fascists shrieked about a *coup d'état* and Bonapartism. The Communist deputies rattled their desk tops in defense of threatened parliamentary democracy, and the Popular Republicans screamed in chorus: "Fascist! Unconstitutional! Insurrection!" while their Socialist neighbors responded in accord with ancient ritual: "Down with the priests!"

Meanwhile François Mauriac tore his hair: *"Ils ont osé tuer la petite fille Espérance!"* (They have dared to kill that infant Hope.) The "infant Hope" (*espérance* is transcendental, not earthly hope) had been Mauriac's personal contribution to the theology of Mendèsianism. Now it was dark again on earth.

IT WOULD be hopeless to analyze Mendès-France's fall in terms of politics. What happened—if we disregard for the moment all the mud and dirt that was slung on this occasion—was nothing unusual. The French legislature, in line with its tradition of government by assembly, will tolerate no strong executive, least of all a chief executive with a popularity and personal authority of his own outside parliament that are not depend-

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ent on his particular political orientation. To appeal to public opinion is the worst sin a politician can commit in a democracy that runs by parliamentary deals.

As in Pinay's case, no one could say in retrospect why and on what issue Mendès-France really fell. Actually, he fell because he did not play according to the rules. There were also historical echoes, as are frequent in the history-haunted Palais Bourbon. It was "a new Thermidor," and the clamoring deputies felt they were playing the part of the Convention that had shouted down Robespierre, the usurper.

The French legislature can muster no majority, express no definite will, strike no balance, but it shows at least the *esprit de corps,* the concern for its prerogatives, of a sovereign, albeit collective, power. It defends "the Republic" by defending itself, all the more indignantly because it is aware of its unpopularity. The popularity of the extra-parliamentary, and in the end all but anti-parliamentary, Mendès-France administration, which "made the nation feel it was at last being governed," was an accurate index to the unpopularity of parliament itself. The Mendès-France team relied upon, and vastly overrated, the "pressure of public opinion," which was felt in all parties but was quickly nullified by the party bureaucracies, even among the Socialists, who felt it most. Until the very end, the staff of *L'Express,* Mendès-France's "own" daily, harbored the illusion that parliament would "not dare overthrow a government backed by the people." (This misconception explains perhaps why the fallen Premier made his tactless last gesture.) But "they" did dare, and "the people" did not rise. The French may wish to "feel" they are being governed, but whether they really wish to be governed is something else.

In a parliamentary system nothing is more normal than the fall of a government that lacks a parliamentary majority. The case becomes pathological only when the parliamentary system can no longer produce anything but accidental, patched-up majorities. The National Assembly put in office by the "prefabricated" elections of 1951 is so composed as to doom in advance any attempt to form a sensible and lasting coalition. Its hundred Communists and fellow-traveling deputies can act only as a negative factor. And its hundred ex-Gaullists are so much driftwood left behind by the receding Gaullist wave. Slowly decomposing into groups, still smaller groups, and lone wolves, they represent every conceivable tendency, from blind reaction to hare-brained national bolshevism. All that they betray of their common origin is a certain jingoistic vocabulary. Thus one-third of the National Assembly can be defined as dead weight.

The hundred "Independents" and "Peasants"—the real main force of conservatism in the Assembly—constitute the physical center of gravity of the parliamentary conglomeration. But they, in line with the traditions of the French conservative right, are splintered, not into organized parties, but into innumerable, bitterly antagonistic personal, local, and corporative cliques and coteries, none of which can combine for long. The organized democratic parties—Radicals, Socialists, Popular Republicans, which are the only parties presumably capable of governing and seriously opposing—hold less than half the National Assembly's seats between them. Running a government of "the left," of "dynamics," of "clear decisions" on such a parliamentary basis, which Mendès-France managed to do for a few weeks, and for six months in appearance, was a miracle.

He not only lacked a solid majority from beginning to end; he never found a political center of gravity around which a coalition might have crystallized. Summoned to liquidate the war in Indo-China, with a sentence of dismissal suspended for thirty days, he was able to turn the diplomatic ratification of a national defeat into a personal triumph. The stock of popularity he brought home from Geneva and promptly reinvested in Tunis gave him time to seat himself more firmly. But he never managed to collect a homogeneous following. By means of fluctuating majorities and ministries he kept himself afloat from one debate to another.

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THE Communists thought at the beginning of Mendès-France's rise that the time had come for a new Popular Front and a "reversal of alliances," and they followed him until EDC was defeated. The bulk of the orphaned Gaullists likewise joined him to kill the EDC, but they also hoped to refloat their stranded ship and again pose before the public as "renovators." With the signing of the Paris Agreements, this support began to disintegrate. Precisely because the Paris Agreements basically meant the triumph of the old Gaullist theses on national sovereignty and German rearmament, the Gaullists did their best to deny them and father the unloved child upon the "Europeans." The Socialists—the only party upon whose votes Mendès could count until the end—consistently refused to cooperate with his government after the failure of his oddly unskillful effort to mobilize the Socialist rank and file against their party leaders. The Radicals, the Premier's own party, staged a spectacular celebration in his honor at their October convention and tried to sun themselves at first in the fresh splendor of his "dynamism." But the Radical party, with its interchangeable loyalties, is the unsinkable cork that always bobs to the top in the parliamentary tub. It was a fellow Radical, Mayer, who finished off Mendès-France's administration, and it was another fellow Radical, Edgar Faure, who had indeed served in his cabinet, who became his successor. Eventually, Mendès-France's sole reliable parliamentary support came from a heterogeneous crowd of dissidents inside the various parties who were eager to be "in" for once; from independents looking for company, from "unclassifiable" personal friends, and at the very last even from deputies obliged to him for certain unorthodox favors.

"Dynamism" was the air "Mendèsianism" lived on. By constantly accelerated motion alone Mendès-France was able for a time to outmaneuver the lumbering party machines that were always getting set to hit him where he had been last week. His tactic of addressing himself to a new problem, "disposing" of it fast, then passing on to another prevented the different oppositions to every single part of his policy from teaming up. But this race against time could not long continue. Early in September, when the Indo-Chinese, Tunisian, and EDC problems had been disposed of for the time being, *L'Express* began to worry about ways and means of avoiding a "relapse into immobilism" and maintaining "the dynamism of the advance." "There is but one means," it wrote, "the pressure of public opinion, the pressure of the young generation. . . . The slightest hesitancy, the first change of pace will make defeat certain. The hopes and energies mobilized by the new team can never serve for deals and compromises to the end of reconciling hostile forces. Daring and stringency alone nurture the national will."

It was a somewhat murky prose that flowered in the shadow of Mendès-France. But the intuition was correct: the hundred days of dynamism were over. The war of attrition began. And it soon became apparent that none of the problems whose "files" had been opened and closed with such magical speed —for that had been the essence of Mendès-France's political "genius"—had thereby ceased to exist.

FOR a few weeks this fatal change of pace was concealed by the great diplomatic crisis following on the rejection of the European Defense Community. Nobody was very eager to take the responsibility and shoulder the blame. Internationally and diplomatically speaking, the EDC crisis ended with the agreements of London and Paris, and the "Europe of Six" is now buried and forgotten. But it still haunts the French, an unlaid specter that keeps alive all the ire and hatred and zeal that accompanied the long war of position between "Europeans" and "anti-Europeans," "EDCers" and "anti-EDCers." The conflict is still as irreconcilable as it was in the two years when EDC, the "skeleton in the closet," poisoned debate in the Palais Bourbon. The Paris Agreements have substituted one international combination for another, and one form of German rearmament for another. To France, all it

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means is the reappearance on her Eastern frontier of a politically and militarily sovereign German state no longer subject to her control. And though the transformation may still be obscured by the continuity of the Bonn government, this new Germany has—owing to a French decision—ceased to swear by "Europe" and "the West." Slowly, and still muddled by her dreams of "freedom from alliances," of neutralism, national unity, and an understanding with Russia, West Germany is beginning to drift in the opposite direction. Certain forms of German anti-militarism may turn out to be more disturbing to France than one or two dozen German divisions would be.

EDC has as many friends in France as German rearmament in any form has opponents. The Paris Agreements, intended to please both factions, have no friends at all. Fear of the difficulties looming after another rejection may cause a majority of the French deputies to let the Paris Agreements pass, but hardly a handful of them are ready to go to bat for them. The *ohne mich* spirit thrives in France, too, in the Palais Bourbon. In December the Agreements were demonstratively rejected; then this was reversed, by dint of Mendès-France's full strength, and arguments that in the days of EDC would have been considered fraud and blackmail. Finally the Agreements were passed by a barely adequate number of votes from "anti-EDCers," who voted as they did because anything else would have looked like triumphant revenge on the part of "Europeans" and "anti-Mendèsians." These were not votes for the Agreements, but for the Premier and his quasi-official pledge that the Agreements would never have to be put into practice because he would reach an understanding with Russia first. If at some future time the Paris Agreements should come up for ratification in the Council of the Republic, or at a second reading in the National Assembly, they would be opposed by those who had voted for them with this mental reservation; and they would have to be rescued by those who had opposed them at first. Even so, a majority still seems likely; France's foreign policy, too, will henceforth be carried on with interchangeable majorities, and as a necessary evil.

At this distance in time the French rejection of EDC can be seen for what it was: a victory for parochialism and a retreat into a passive foreign policy under the shelter of America and Britain. And therein lay perhaps the most profound contradiction of the Mendèsian "national revolution" which was claiming to open a dynamic era, but began by closing the windows and pulling down the shades.

Issues supposedly settled by Mendès-France kept churning in the other filing cabinets he had opened and closed at such a record pace. The word "solution" is one of the most abused catchwords of political demagoguery: there are no solutions in politics, only chances to affect and perhaps guide developments, to speed them up or delay them.

Mendès-France closed the Indo-Chinese file at Geneva, did not look at it again, and never chose between the alternative French policies: agreement with Ho Chi Minh and consolidation of South Vietnam, or systematic withdrawal from Indo-China. Six months after Geneva the situation is still drifting—towards a new catastrophe. For the present, handing the North to the Communists and putting the disintegrating South under the care of the Americans has indeed gotten Indo-China "off the necks" of the French—but at the same time the government has stripped itself of virtually all power to fulfill its obligations under the armistice. Meanwhile the Tunisian file had grown into a mountain of conference minutes; the no less pressing Algerian and Moroccan files were never opened; and there was of course no time to tackle still other problems. The capacities of one-man government are limited, even if the one man has superhuman energy.

The second phase of the Mendèsian experiment began as its "consolidation." The movement had come to a halt, but the "style of the movement" was maintained—the style of a marathon runner carved in marble.

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There came the flowering of a vocabulary: Youth, Dynamism, Modernity, Will, Hope, which soon replaced all exact statements of methods and objectives. What followed next was a series of brilliantly improvised soap bubbles: the Franco-German industrial cooperation scheme, the North African industrial combine, the fight against alcoholism, the free milk and surplus sugar distribution to school children, the establishment of the "Ministry of Hope"—*secrétaire d'Etat préposé à l'Espérance*—which recalled Orwell's *1984*. There followed tours of cities by Mendès-France, speeches to the youth, baby-kissing—then his twin apotheoses: the first was at the Marseilles convention of the Radical party, where the Republican Old Guard, delighted at its sudden rejuvenation, acclaimed Mendès-France (while the time bombs set for his overthrow were being prepared in the back rooms of that same convention). The second apotheosis was the American trip of "Mr. France."

By the time he returned the magic had worn off. The last and all but tragic phase opened: the battle for the ratification of the Paris Agreements—and Mendès tried desperately to remain afloat beyond this point, by any means, however mean and petty.

The Mendèsians have always, and often justly, accused their opponents of waging a ceaseless *"procès d'intentions"* against Mendès-France: of imputing to him all sorts of evil designs because they could find nothing vulnerable in his actions. In a few police-type brains on the extreme Right, these insinuations had grown to mythomaniacal proportions. But it is a fact that his "government of clear decisions" remained to the end a government of ambiguities. This resulted almost inevitably from its political, its parliamentary, and (something never to be forgotten in France!) its police-conspiratorial situation. It was P. M.-F.'s own propaganda staff that constantly circulated conflicting official, semi-official, and unofficial versions of his "real" intentions, in order to keep the disparate elements of his following in line; in the very last days before his fall Mendès himself tried to win back the support or at least the neutrality of the Communists by semi-official promises about his foreign policy after ratification of the Paris Agreements.

The mistake—or the malice—was to assume that Mendès-France had come to power with any clear-cut, over-all political conception. Actually his whole ideological stock-in-trade was the conviction that France could regain her strength and stature under nothing more than a skillful manager who would blow the accumulated dust off the files, wipe the slate clean, and then decide on everything without prejudice, according to the facts of the case. He had no one big idea, but a great many good ideas. He believed in the effectiveness of sheer pragmatic ability; this belief had much to recommend it, and went wrong only in mistaking political problems for arithmetical ones, solvable by bookkeeping methods.

For a few weeks this fresh, realistic breeze caused a welcome clearing of the air and shook up some false beards and poses. But in the final result the great magician's show of the "eternally young, eternally forward-marching, eternally revolutionary Republic" clarified nothing and only muddled things a little further. (It is just this kind of phraseology that keeps France from seeing herself as she is.) The great question now is whether Mendèsianism will remain a force to reckon with after its parliamentary demise.

From a parliamentary point of view, the settlement of the succession to Mendès was simple, even if the ritual of the crisis seemed complicated. The National Assembly has rediscovered its center of gravity. The eternal faultfinders, once more carping at "French instability," really ought to admire the magnificent continuity beneath this seeming chaos. Edgar Faure was Minister of Economics, Finance, and Planning in the Laniel administration, the one that became a popular legend as the embodiment of ossified reactionary, unsocial "immobilism." Edgar Faure was Minister of Economics, Finance, and Planning in the Mendès-France administration, the one that won international renown as the epitome of a progressive, youth-

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ful, all but revolutionary activism. And now Edgar Faure is Premier.

Unswervingly, the same economic policy is continued, by the same all-powerful finance ministry operating now under a leftist, now under a rightist label. In the modernistic garb of Edgar Faure's "neo-capitalism" it faithfully follows the centuries-old mercantilist traditions of the *"Grand Commis"*—their instinctive distrust of any natural survival of the fittest through free competition, their unshakable conviction that it is up to the *Contrôle général des Finances* to steer the nation's life in the prescribed channels by systematically skimming and redistributing the national income, by precariously balancing huge deficits that are never reduced but are occasionally wiped out by inflation, by an inextricable mechanism of subsidies, grants, fiscal privileges, compensations, and "reconversions." It is a system that cannot function without the rigid framework of "national economic sovereignty." But with the assault on that sovereignty now beaten off, and with France, too, blithely afloat on the present euphorious general prosperity in Western Europe, there is less reason than ever for changing methods or conceptions.

This program of administrative continuity offers no political platform for the simple reason that it is not an issue. Once a whole nation has become a public welfare client, the only argument is about distribution quotas.

Political debate, however, feeds on myths, and there is no doubt that a new myth has been added to French politics: the "P. M.-F. myth." Six months of governing in his brilliant "new style" have not only made of Mendès-France one of those consular personalities that stand ready to master any emergency; they have also given him the special position of predestined candidate for exceptionally dangerous situations. The real question is whether it will be possible to activate the "P. M.-F. myth" off the floor of the Assembly, in a "Mendèsian movement"—which was what the Premier quite clearly intended to do when he used the rostrum of the Palais Bourbon to appeal to the people against the no-confidence vote.

THE conditions seem propitious. France faces an election year, and all the energies of parties and politicians are now engaged in lining up for it. This was the sole meaning of the changes and false starts in the recent government crisis, with its "left" and "right" swings of the pendulum. In this pre-election mood, the "leftist" label is always much sought after, and Mendès-France has done much to bring it back into fashion. Thanks to his rejuvenation treatment, Radicals and Gaullists have successfully placed themselves on "the left," and what infuriated the Popular Republicans more than anything else was the realization that they were being pushed over on "the right."

Towards the end of the year, François Mauriac and André Malraux acted as godfathers to a still fairly ethereal "new left" in *L'Express*, the chief Mendèsian newspaper; and after P. M.-F.'s fall the same paper drew up a complete plan of action to "mobilize the masses" for the next election. The program was inspired by every revolutionary period in French history; neither the *Cahiers de doléances* of 1789 nor the "banquet campaign" of 1848 was missing. The journalistic potentialities of such a campaign are not to be underrated in view of the great talent which the P. M.-F. team has shown in this field. And it is more of an advantage for a myth than a drawback if its content is nebulous and its character really definable only in such stylistic terms as novelty, youth, movement, dynamics. But who is going to line up behind the new myth? The label of the "new left" has been passed out dozens of times, and most of the groups that had adopted it—groups in which dissidents of the classic left keep forming new combinations with disillusioned activists of Gaullism and Christian Democracy—quit Mendès-France months ago, when he, in their eyes, "betrayed Mendèsianism." None among the Socialists, trade-unionists, or "progressives" and neutralists agitating for a new Popular Front, not to mention the Communists, has

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the slightest intention of recognizing Mendès-France as "Leader of the Opposition." The left is too crowded and organized in too many parties and sects to leave room for a "new left." The Gaullists, on the other hand, have rejected the Mendèsian blandishments, testily pointing out that if a chief is wanted for a "renovation movement" they already have one. They did not mind the Mendès-France administration, especially since they were well represented in it, but in the final analysis they feel it only bore out General de Gaulle's contention that "nothing can be done under this system." This does not prevent his faithful adherents from occupying as many cabinet chairs in Edgar Faure's administration as in Mendès-France's.

As for new bills of grievances in the style of the *Cahiers de doléances,* these are now being edited on a large and often violent scale by the peasant organizations and the "Poujade movement." The latter represents a spontaneous uprising of the backward areas of France, of the stagnated and impoverished *mezzogiorno,* of the small businessmen whom the ebb tide of inflation has repauperized. With its sinister tincture of xenophobia and anti-Semitism, and its boundlessly exploitable faith in slogans—elements apparently ingrained in every middle class "revolt"—this movement can be used for election purposes, but hardly by a Mendèsian "new left."

In sum, the experiment in style of the P. M.-F. has not brought France any closer to a clarification of her problems of political alignments. A new myth has been born, but myths are not what France is lacking in.

ALMOST all French political mystification begins with a mixup of dates, and the many noted historians active in French politics, like Herriot, Daladier, and Bidault, excel in such mixups. "We are in the year 1788," Pierre Mendès-France exclaimed at the 1953 Radical convention, and Edouard Herriot, the Grand Old Man, greeted the old party's young genius with the jubilant cry: "And you are our Necker!" This comparison of the most astute, quick-witted, and competent political analyst the Radical party has produced in years with one of history's most fatal stuffed-shirts was an enigmatic compliment.

The solemn, pompous Geneva banker whose artistry in borrowing money prolonged the life of the insolvent Bourbon monarchy by a few years, only to make it founder in all the more hopeless bankruptcy, was the first statesman in French history—perhaps in world history—to be a pure creature of publicity. The clamor of the "philosophers" he fed at his table, of the literary salons and enlightened cafes not only forced him on Louis XVI's desperate court but made the public accept him as a great wizard who could get rid of all problems without sweat or tears, without taxation or infringement of privileges—by the mere miracle of credit. Unperturbably doubling the public debt at usurious rates, mortgaging the future, and palming off the deficit as a surplus, Necker conjured up, for a hopelessly bankrupt system, one more illusion of buoyancy, youth, and hope. And when he fell, the people really rose: the traders, the savers, the philosophers, even the rabble. It is indicative of the whole national sense of history that this caricature was the highest praise that Herriot felt he could bestow upon his "crown prince designate."

The strangest feature in the political mentality of this seemingly so rational country is its unlimited belief in miracles. Nothing is as bad as it appears, and if the ship of state should really run aground, the Maid of Orleans would be just around the corner—Joan of Arc or Charles de Gaulle, Necker, or Mendès-France, *"le préposé à l'Espérance."* But France is not in the year 1788, either for better or for worse. The *Contrôle général des Finances* has no trouble handling its one thousand billion deficit, and nothing points to the imminence of a new 1789—which was, after all, an explosion of vitality that shattered all ancient forms.

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MY FATHER'S LIFE

A Story

DAVID RAPHAEL KLEIN

IN A city in the deep South, where my father lived when a young man, he would sometimes telephone a number which he knew would not be answered. In those days a "Central" operator handled calls. After some ringing, Central would report, "There is no answer." My father would say, "That's funny. There ought to be someone home. Are you ringing the right number?" Central would try again. Again she would report no answer. My father would comment on how odd it was, Central would make some reply, and my father would hang up. There was no call he wanted to make. But at least he had spoken to the telephone operator. My father was very lonely when he lived in the South as a young man with his father and mother.

My father was handsome, with dark gleaming hair, large brown eyes, and a slight stoop, as if he were not quite sure of his step. He wore collars two sizes larger than he needed; he claimed they were more comfortable. He loved good leather, had a beautiful handwriting, and ate very heavily.

A few years later, the family moved to New York, where my father and grandfather opened another shoe store, such as they had had in the South. One day a young woman came in who caught my father's interest. She was tall, straight-backed, pretty, and wore a proud expression. My father noticed that she seemed to be known in the store. When she left, he asked about her and learned that her people were in business up the street; my grandfather knew them slightly.

In a short time the young people had met officially, gone out, and seemed suited to one another. A marriage was arranged by the older folks, and the engagement was announced. My father was happy.

ONE night, three weeks before the wedding was to take place, my father came to see his fiancée and there were tears welling in his eyes. For over six years he had been in effect his father's partner, sharing all the work and responsibility of their businesses. Now that he was to be married, he had asked his father to make the partnership clear and official. He had been refused, rather coldly.

His fiancée had something to tell him that night, too, and she was too inexperienced to withhold it for another time. She had been thinking their engagement over very carefully. She was not sure she liked the solemn young man with the dark eyes and the hesitant walk. There was something about the way he looked at her, too. She wanted to break the engagement.

My father fell upon his knees. The tears he had been holding back out of pride now formed fully and broke. How could she do it? he asked. Was he nothing to her? If she didn't want him now, he had nowhere to turn; there was no future for him. He looked up at her, his face stained like a child's. Please, please, please. She couldn't desert him, he cried.

The sight of the man weeping this way unsettled the young woman; she had not expected such a reaction. She agreed to go ahead with the marriage, the way it had

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been planned. She was very sorry for him.

They had a two-weeks honeymoon on a farm near Kingston. When they returned, his wife's father put him in touch with a man who wanted a partner for a new shoe store, and lent him the money to start with. My father worked hard and effectively, preparing the new store. His wife was pregnant.

The night I was born it rained, and the store had been open only a few hours. There was a totally unexpected demand for overshoes. Within a short time the entire stock of rubbers and galoshes had been sold out. My father came upstairs over the store to see my mother and the baby, and there was a happy light in his eye. The new store was going to be a success.

EVERYTHING went well. Business was good, the stock increased, the loan was paid off. But there was one difficulty. My father found he didn't like his partner; the man now appeared gross and vulgar to him. My father complained about him more and more, then suddenly told my mother he wanted to sell out. She was horror-stricken. "Leave a good business for him to grow rich in? You're crazy," she said.

"You don't understand my feelings," my father said. "A man like that—he gets on my nerves. Every day is torture. I can't stay with him. Don't ask me to do it. I just can't." In the end, my mother agreed. After all, it was man's business.

Now he had more capital, and he opened a new store of his own. It thrived from the first. Another child was born. Of course, my mother spent most of her time in the store, and after the child was weaned, she began to help with the trade in busy hours. She was bright and had a way with people; she handled customers with greater and greater authority. In the back of the store, she cooked, fed the family, and talked business with my father. He ate alone; the children seemed to bother him. Little by little he began to turn over any especially difficult customers to my mother.

The number of difficult customers seemed to increase as the store prospered, and my father began to talk about it. There was too much bargaining, too much suspiciousness, too much loud talk in the store. It was the Jewish trade, he said. Gentile customers were not like that. What was the use of making a living if you weren't happy in it? He thought of closing up, holding an auction, re-opening in a Gentile neighborhood.

This time my mother put up a battle. In their room, night after night, into the small hours, they argued about it. My father would plead with my mother not to make him continue with something he detested. My mother told him he had no right to detest. He had strange ideas. He was not like other men. He had talked it into himself, this trouble.

One day my father had to go downtown to see a wholesaler, and we walked to the trolley car with him. As he boarded it and the car moved off, my mother said, "Look at him, how he carries his head down in front of the conductor. He's afraid of the whole world." She looked disgusted.

The nightly arguments went on, and finally my mother suggested he spend a few weeks in the country. She would handle the store alone. He agreed, but in three days he was back. It had gotten on his nerves. He had been very lonely, and there was no telephone in the store. My mother's resistance broke, and she agreed to the move. The auction was held.

The new store in the Gentile neighborhood failed within six months. My father lost all his capital. After a time he borrowed money, secured some credit for stock, and located a new store, in the Jewish section again. It would not be as grand as the other one, but with luck it would build. The night before it opened, we walked with him on the main street of the Jewish shopping area. "Ah, look at the lights, the crowds in the street," he said. "There was nothing like that in the Gentile neighborhood." My mother walked silently.

There were many debts to face in the new store, and my father, once a bankrupt, found it hard to handle his creditors. He shrank from asking for more time; he felt himself

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to be a poor risk; so he tried to pay and keep the business going at the same time. Soon we moved to a cheaper apartment. My mother got a little job selling for a relative. It did not help. The store closed.

EVENTUALLY, he got a job in another shoe store. It was the first time he had worked for anyone except his father. One night he came home with his jaws set, his expression fierce. The story came. At first he seemed angry at us as he told it.

The boss had treated him as though he were a boy, ordering him to go down to the cellar during a slack period and carry up stock. A man who had had his own business, a man like him! His lips worked; his eyes grew moist.

My mother said, "You dig your own grave. Why do you take it so hard? You don't like the job, ask around about another. Be like other men. Be like a man altogether. Don't cry, do something."

My father got up from the table, holding his head low, and went into the bedroom. We heard him put a chair against the door, under the knob, locking himself in.

Then, while he was out of a job, my father got a wonderful idea. He had noticed that when the trolley cars were crowded, the conductor, busy collecting fares, never knew when the last person had cleared the boarding step and it was safe to go ahead. Accidents could happen. It took a lot of the conductor's time and delayed the car. Why not—here was his invention—have a sort of plate on the car step with an electrical connection to a big lamp in the car? While someone was still standing on the plate, the lamp would be lit and the conductor would know not to give the motorman the signal to go ahead. He explained it to my mother, watching her face. Her eyes fell. She said it might be a good idea, but what he needed was a job. My father got very angry at her.

Just a few weeks later, the first one-man trolley cars appeared on the streets, without any conductor at all. People got on and off at the front, where the motorman could see them. My father spoke about it. "I have no luck," he said. "I'm not dumb, I can figure things out. I just have no luck."

Now when my mother told my father what was wrong with him, he no longer argued with her; he seemed to agree. One Sunday morning, my mother woke me quite early. "Get dressed," she said in a whisper, as if there were someone listening, "I want you to do something for me." When I was ready, she gave me a slip of paper on which was written a nearby address. "Go see if Papa is there. If he is, tell him I said to come home with you."

It was a furnished room. My father was there. When I gave him my mother's words, he stood for a while thinking; then he placed a key carefully on the bed and left with me.

On the way home a strange thing happened. My father tried to talk to me. I was eleven, but we had never talked much. He had always been either busy with my mother, or locked up in the bedroom alone. Now, with sidelong glances at me as we walked along, he asked if I was having a good time at school. It seemed weird to talk of a good time that morning. He seemed weird to me too. I tried to produce a nice answer, but I couldn't. He turned away from me and fell silent, looking straight ahead as he plodded up the street.

We all went to the movies that night, and everyone seemed happier. My father promised my mother that the very next day he would apply for a laundry driver's job that had been advertised. But when we rose to go to school and my mother to go to work, he was still in bed; my mother put her fingers to her lips, and we tiptoed out.

MY FATHER woke a little later, and, I suppose, noticed the time with surprise. When he looked around for my mother, she was gone. There was no coffee made, and he would have to cook it himself; he filled the pot with water, but although he took down half the cans and boxes in the pantry, he couldn't find the coffee. She would be gone all day long. He sat down on the bed and reached for his socks. At the heel of the left there was a large hole that

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showed above the shoe. He threw it down and opened several drawers but there were no other socks. On the dresser there was the page of help-wanted ads, with the one for the laundry driver checked off. He went into the kitchen and began to walk around and around on the linoleum.

Downstairs the neighbors heard my father walking in a regular pattern around and around on the floor. There would be no one coming home; the children ate at school. He walked around and around. Then he took a decision. He picked up the Sunday papers and went into the little old-fashioned bathroom we had. He spread the papers on the floor. He locked the door tight. Then my father opened the gas jet, lay down on the floor, and died.

LOST HERITAGE

CHARLES GAINES

And who are these, here sheltered from the rain,
beneath the marquee of the opera house
where Siegfried bravely fought upon the stage
and slew the beast of evil with his sword?
Who are these people standing in the lobby
lifting their voices to the passing crowd
while neons blaze their products on and off
and curses drift by in the Southern wind?
And who is this, that walks into the traffic
against the lights without a thought of death
that comes so swiftly down the avenue
amid a chorus of screams this rainy evening?
And who are these, that scream these vain alarms
these frantic ones, that wave their futile arms
these thirsty ones, that rush to see the blood?
oblivious of the rain to see the blood!
Is this the end for which this man was born
to walk by chance to this untimely death
(his wife and children thinking he is safe)
beneath the wheels that tell us hurry hurry?
Or was there something in the now deceased
that caused the gear of destiny to turn
another notch to universal death
and cold oblivion in eternity?
But this is drama, drama! what a drama!
the screeching brakes . . . the screams of agony . . .
the pool of blood . . . the surging of the mob . . .
the pawn of death that vainly looks to heaven.

In a previous issue, January 1954, we printed two poems by the young Negro writer Charles Gaines. They were his first published work. Mr. Gaines, who now lives in New York City, was born in Baltimore in 1924.

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TWO MORE NEW PSALMS

As Translated from the Dead Sea Scrolls

SINCE 1947, scholars have been awaiting publication of the texts of the Dead Sea scrolls that were found in the now famous Qumran caves. Perhaps the most important archeological discovery of our time, the seven scrolls are a thousand years older than any similar extant material. They include a complete version of the Book of Isaiah, a commentary on the Book of Habakkuk, a Manual of Discipline (possibly used by a sect of the Essenes), the Book of Lamech, a document reporting "The War of the Children of Light Against the Children of Darkness," a fragment from Isaiah, and a collection of Hymns that the late Professor E. L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University called *Megillat ha-Hoydayot*, "The Scroll of Thanksgiving Hymns." Professor Sukenik was the first to recognize the importance of the find, and bought the latter three scrolls for the University, which has just announced their publication. The first four scrolls were acquired, early this year, by the Israeli government.

The hymns in the "Scroll of Thanksgiving" are the only works of their kind that we now possess dating between the period of the Biblical Psalms and the earliest of the devotional poems known as *Piyyutim*. They are of immense importance for the study of the development of Jewish psalmody at the time of the advent of Christianity—if we accept the scholarly consensus that the date of the composition of the scrolls is between the 2nd century B.C.E. and the 1st century C.E.

In May 1952 COMMENTARY printed two psalms from this same scroll. Here we present two more, in a translation by Dr. Menahem Mansoor, whose complete English version, with critical notes, of the "Scroll of Thanksgiving Hymns" will be published during the coming year. This is the first translation of these particular psalms to be published anywhere. Dr. Mansoor, of Trinity College, Dublin, is now lecturing on modern Arabic and Samaritan grammar in the Oriental Seminary at Johns Hopkins University on a Fulbright Fellowship. He is also a Visiting Fellow at Princeton and Yale. In his work on the "Scroll of Thanksgiving Hymns," Dr. Mansoor wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to Professor W. F. Albright of Johns Hopkins.—ED.

I

I SHALL praise Thee, my God, for Thou hast wrought marvels with dust and with a creature of clay Thou hast acted mightily; (I) praise (Thee), (I) praise (Thee).

For what am I, that Thou (hast made known) to me Thy true counsel, and enlightened me through Thy wondrous deeds, and Thou has put songs of praise in my mouth, and on my tongue—(a supplication)?

Shape my lips unto a place for rejoicing so that I may sing the praises of Thy lovingkindness, and in Thy might I may muse.

All the day, continually, I shall bless Thy name, and I shall declare Thy glory among the sons of men, and in the abundance of Thy goodness shall my soul delight.

For I know that truth is (in) Thy mouth; and in Thy hand—righteousness; and in Thy thought is all knowledge; and in Thy power is all might and all glory is with Thee.

In Thy wrath are all judgments of affliction, but in Thy goodness (there is) abundant forgiveness, and Thy mercies are on all Thy favored sons.

For Thou hast made known to them Thy true counsel, and through Thy marvelous secrets Thou hast enlightened them.

And for the sake of Thy glory, Thou hast cleansed man from transgression so that he may consecrate himself for Thee.

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(Thou hast cleansed him) from all impure abominations and guilt of evil-doing, to be united (with) Thy true sons, and with the destiny of Thy holy people.

To lift the worm of men from dust unto (eternal) counsel, and from a perverted spirit unto the understanding of (God).

And to stand in array before Thee, with the eternal host and (the true) spirits, to be renewed with all creation and with those who know to rejoice in the Community.

II

I SHALL (praise Thee), O Lord, for Thou hast enlightened me through Thy truth.

And Thy marvelous secrets Thou hast made known to me, and Thy lovingkindness (Thou hast made known) to (a wicked) man, and Thy abundant mercies to those of distorted understanding.

Who is like unto Thee among the mighty, O Lord?

And who is like unto Thy truth?

Who shall be righteous in Thy sight when he is judged?

For no spirit can answer Thy chastisement, neither can anyone stand against Thy wrath.

But all Thy true children Thou shalt bring before Thee in forgiveness (to cleanse) them from their transgression; in the abundance of Thy goodness, and the overflowing of Thy compassion, to make them stand before Thee to eternity.

For verily, Thou art an everlasting God, and all Thy ways shall be established for ever (and ever); there is none else beside Thee.

And who is he, man of emptiness and vanity, to consider Thy wondrous deeds?

In the assemblies (I shall bless Thy name).

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

VERMONT PIONEER FROM FLATBUSH

"... The Fretful Porpentine"

S. T. HECHT

SOME years ago I bought what a real estate man in Vermont described as an abandoned farm in the southern part of his state. Considering that I myself had come a barefoot boy, so to speak, from the foothills of Flatbush, I didn't do badly; but the price I paid in cash was nothing compared to what it cost me in argument with my relatives.

First, Uncle Harry took one look at the snapshot of my tar-papered beauty in the hills and remarked, "One thing even the hurricanes wouldn't touch!" Uncle Itzik took a look and declared that my estate very much resembled the place whither poor Dreyfus was banished. Mother's brother, Uncle Benny, just stared: "A Jew goes to such a place!"

Even Uncle Beryl, whose opinions had the merit of being as strong as they were wrong, minced no words: "Sam, you're *farblonjet*—you're off your base." Now I could have told Beryl that it was really he who was *farblonjet*. Beryl sold goods from house to house on the installment plan and was so involved in making a buck that it left him little time for anything else. He told me that instead of my going off to Vermont and burying myself in the wilderness "where you don't belong" he'd give me the opportunity to work for him during my long summer vacations. "You'll learn a good business!"

Only Uncle Shloime had an encouraging word. He asked me to explain what were all those huge things sticking up in the fields, and when I told him they were granite boulders he clacked his tongue, showed his teeth in a large smile, and told me that with hard work and some capital I could become the Tombstone King of Brooklyn. "With the prices they're getting for tombstones you could give up school-teaching altogether!"

But it was with my father and mother that we had our greatest problems—in June when we came to say goodbye, and again in September when we reappeared for inspection.

The first time we took off for Vermont, Mother said, "Suppose something should happen, God forbid?"

"Nothing will happen, Mama."

"You got two little ones. In the middle of the night for no reason comes God forbid God knows what."

If they're really healthy, I said, then they'd be healthier in the good air.

"Who's talking healthier? I'm talking, God

WHEN the second generation breaks out of the close Jewish neighborhoods of the big city into the untamed wilderness, be it only the backwoods of four-hours-away Vermont, one must expect a certain amount of skeptical qualms on the part of its elders who were raised in a culture that perhaps admired the things of nature, but only at a safe distance. Here S. T. HECHT, who has contributed a number of sketches bearing on the differing (and conflicting) visions of the various Jewish generations in America, recounts what happens when one sets out to domesticate a piece of wild Vermont Eden. With it goes the running commentary of watching (and watchful) grandparents and relatives. Mr. Hecht, who teaches English and economics at East Side High School in Newark, New Jersey, has contributed frequently to this magazine. Until now, however, he had concentrated on community life in "Reedville." Mr. Hecht was born in Poland in 1895, and came to this country in 1906.

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forbid, that with children you never know. How far from a doctor?"

I said I'd find out when we got there.

"You mean you went and bought a place without first finding out a thing like that?"

My father stood by, repeating to himself, "No telephone, no lights, no running water."

"People have lived there before, Papa."

"Sure! But not Jewish people!"

"What's the difference?" I demanded.

My father looked at me. "My son," he said sorrowfully, "if a young man of thirty-five don't know yet what is the difference between Jewish people and the *goyim,* then it's sad."

FORTUNATELY none of the family came to see us during the first summer and we were left to learn the difference unembarrassed. I did not cut a very brave figure the night two bears fought over the carcass of a porcupine I had felled with a club and innocently heaved over an embankment right by the house. Barricaded in the small room we called the kitchen, Sylvia and the children left me to play the irresolute hero at the door of the cabin, posed I'm afraid in the best tradition of the Flatbush neighborhood-house films, sweat oozing out of every pore in me, with a long-handled ax tightly gripped in both my hands. We spoke in terrified whispers in the dark, my ears keener than I ever knew they could be and my sight boring through the black of night so I could almost see the struggle between the two beasts. The snarling that came to me over the hushed night and the swish of their bodies brushing against the bushes that surrounded our small dwelling, and finally the snapping of the dead lower branches of the pines as the bears passed under them and away into the denser woods, still linger with me. I believe I could still detect the presence of a bear by the rank odor that settled into my dilated nostrils during that horrible night as I stood, like an embattled pioneer, at the door, for hours it seemed, wondering what kind of fool I was to have brought myself and my family into such needless danger. For many a night thereafter I slept with an ax at my bed.

That first summer I also learned that it is much easier to talk about clearing an area of unwanted trees and undergrowth than it is to do it. I suppose the Yankee real estate agent who told me with a straight face that in a matter of days I could have a lawn at my door still attends church regularly every Sunday. As for me, I am glad he hornswoggled me into a task that I would never recommend to any city man so ill equipped with tools and experience as I was. Certainly when the end of the first summer came, we were sorry it was over.

Back in Flatbush, Larry and Jerry were hauled off to the barber's and then thoroughly scrubbed in the bathtub. Finally they were squeezed into city clothes that within a few months seemed to have shrunk.

"My! How they've grown!" Sylvia exclaimed, preparing for the role of daughter-in-law.

Larry was all for bringing along to show Grandpa the two snakeskins he had found, also some white porcupine quills left sticking at the end of my cudgel, which in a fit of pioneer exaggeration I had begun to call "the persuader." He also had a chipmunk hide stretched on a small board.

"Keep them for your Cub Scout Den," I suggested.

"How's Grandpa gonna know what we did?"

"Never mind." I thought of the other trophies we couldn't show. The tumbled splendor of the hills, the feel of early morning in the woods. The sun drops in like a warm blessing. Every leaf and flower exhales its own perfume and each living thing darts into a new day with delight. The noon is cool and shaded, and as night approaches, it brings along an unmatched serenity.

"Can I tell him about the bears?"

"Positively not!"

AT MY mother's you would have thought we had returned from Mars.

"At last!" she sighed, wiping an eye. "Now I'll sleep at night."

She examined both our boys, feeling them for solid content as if she were buying live poultry for the Jewish holidays. Thank God, she said, they both looked good.

"You didn't had no trouble, Sylvia?"

Sylvia said, "Knock wood!"

"So let be 'knock wood.' In my house we say, 'Thank God.'"

She then sent her searching glance up and down the length of me and turned to Sylvia.

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"Him something isn't right."

"Why, Mother! He looks wonderful!"

"Wonderful she says yet!"

"Look how straight he stands! He lost fifteen pounds!"

"And by you that's wonderful, losing fifteen pounds? Go try find some place fifteen pounds in a hurry!"

Papa asked what I had done to get so thin.

"Worked!"

"Crazy people!" Mother cried. "Working on vacation! Who ever heard of such a thing? On vacation you sit on a porch and eat three times a day and fix yourself."

Indignantly she began to probe at my ribs. After all, whose son was I? In a rising voice she demanded, "For this you buying a place? I don't understand, Sylvia!"

When my mother said she didn't understand, she really meant that *you* didn't understand. It was quite apparent by now whom she was going to hold accountable for the untimely demise of her son.

"Why you want him to be a farmer?"

Sylvia stared at me, and I saw that I must make again the eternal choice between my mother and my wife.

"Who's a farmer?" I said. "It's just a summer camp. No barns to clean. No animals."

"We had porcupines," chirped Larry.

"And snakes," added Jerry, who was not to be outdone.

"Everything that Noah put in the ark," said my father. He called to Larry: "Did you had a good time, *tatele?*"

Talkative *tatele* conveyed the information that I had fallen from a ladder.

"Vey iz mir!" groaned my mother.

WHY Uncle Benny, of all people, should have been the first of the clan to hunt us up during our second summer is beyond knowing. I was still chopping away at the spruce and pine where there was going to be a green lawn some day. Larry was tending a fire of hard-hack, and Sylvia, in blue jeans and a brief top, had just come tearing out of the camp to tell me that the porcupine had come back in under the house and couldn't I come and please do something or she would go crazy. In the midst of this, so help me as we say, there draws up a car with a New York license plate and at the wheel sits my corpulent Uncle Benny, surveying the wilderness with an expression of amazement such as must have been on Adam's face when he first walked out of Eden into the *vald*.

"How did you find us?" I exclaimed.

"I had plenty trouble!" said he, regarding me as if I had made heaven and earth and the wilderness too.

Sylvia dashed back into camp for properer clothes.

"Who could imagine?" Benny said to Molly, and they both stared in holy horror at what they saw. To me he explained that he was on his way to New Hampshire "for the hay fever" when "it had to come to them the idea" of dropping in on us.

"But what is to drop into?" he asked, again surveying our homestead.

Before he was married to Molly he had lived in our home with my mother. Once he took me to the race track where he must have had a good day. On the way out through the gate he patted me and said that I had brought him extra good luck and he peeled off a five-dollar bill from a roll. "It's yours, Sammy. But don't tell Mama!" Not until my high school days did I fully understand that the world frowned on Benny's way of earning a living. But Mother always insisted that he helped many needy people. All I know definitely is that he was good to me when I was a boy and that's what counts, I guess. Certainly he was not fat and suppressed in those days. When the mood stirred him he would sing the catchy music-hall ditties he had learned while he was in London, or he'd spill over into humorous cockney chatter while cutting neat economical capers in the best vaudeville manner. But his marriage changed him. Molly took him and his money in hand, and it was, I fancied, out of his blue eyes that I now saw a flash of the old Uncle Benny trying to speak to me, to say that if it were not for Molly, if he were alone, it would be different. But it was a lost effort. Molly was there beside him—Molly, one of those Jewish women with an even shrewder sense of business than her husband's. She had taken his winnings and invested them in sound properties. In ten years she had made him fat and respectable. Without children to look after, they soon had themselves on their own hands, and were both in need of continuous medical attention. It might have been hu-

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morous, if it weren't so costly and frustrating for them. At my insistence now he struggled out from behind the wheel, breathing hard and looking like a frightened overfed animal at the stark wilderness.

Sylvia reappeared, shook hands with Uncle Benny, and said how nice it was to see him. Then she opened the car door on Molly's side and said to her to please come out.

"Not for no money!" answered Molly, sternly repressing her full indignation.

"Be a sport!" I cried, but she said she had high-heeled shoes and nylons and refused to budge.

Larry meanwhile offered to lead Uncle Benny into the house, so he could see the porcupine under the floor joists.

"I'll show you where he's eating a hole right through the floor."

He told Benny what a time we had had in the night with that ugly beast.

"Papa tried to poke him and I held the searchlight but we couldn't drive him out."

Aunt Molly's face remained frozen and Benny lost no time in turning his car around. She gave us a cold goodbye, and as the car moved off between two walls of chokecherry and sassafras she whispered something in Yiddish to Uncle Benny which was beyond my knowledge of the language.

SOME three weeks after this came the high crisis of our second summer and perhaps of all our summers. In as pleasant a day as Vermont can give, with white-bellied clouds skimming the tops of the green hills and the sun so warm you'd say it was itself enjoying the pleasantness it diffused, there appeared in a brand new Ford, soundless as if the wind had spirited him up the hill, the only one of my uncles with whom it was possible to exchange some of our enthusiasms.

He was out of his car before I got to him, and unmindful of his surroundings, he stood me right close to his new blue car and said proudly, "*Nu,* Sam. How you like it?"

I said it was beautiful and shouted to Sylvia to come out.

Shloime was a large person, the tallest of my father's five brothers, with features in proportion to his body. Everything about him was huge—his nose, his eyes, his forehead. Even his voice seemed to have been given him for the proper fulfillment of his labors, which was peddling fruits and vegetables. I can remember he used to drive up to our house twice a week to sell, as he said, at cost, whatever Mama needed. Only that at times Mother very much doubted if it was at cost. "Your brother Shloime," she used to complain to Papa, "is making a good penny on me." "So he'll grow rich on us," said my father.

Shloime didn't even own the horse and wagon he used to peddle with, yet I distinctly recall his name, SOLOMON NUSSENBENZ, on the sides of the wagon. The lettering had the N's and the Z's inverted, so that it was plain he had done it himself. He sat under a large striped umbrella that advertised Loeser's Department Store, the scale at the side of the wagon swinging back and forth as the poor jade hung with bells made her jangling slow way along the quiet streets of Brooklyn. Before Easter Uncle Shloime used to walk beside his horse and holler in that raw hog-calling voice of his . . . JEWRANIUMS! . . . PAHNSIES! . . . loud enough for every woman in Brooklyn to hear him. When he visited our house with his wife and kids my mother would try to tone him down, as if it were her duty to instruct him in what his own wife Bessie had failed to do. "Shloime, you ain't peddling now!" she would hint, and I could feel that she was being embarrassed before her neighbors. I resented, too, the doubtful tonality of her welcomes to Uncle Shloime and his family. She sounded quite different when Uncle Benny or Uncle Harry, both well-to-do, put in their appearances. "Long may I live! What a pleasure!" But Uncle Shloime was greeted with an equivocal "*Nu, nu.* Look who's here."

As if to repair all these slights I welcomed Shloime with both my hands, and when Sylvia appeared she threw her arms around him and cried, "How wonderful! How wonderful!" until Shloime's big features were all doubled up with bright wrinkles and delightful smiles.

After the business of the new car was out of the way, I asked after Aunt Bessie.

He had driven her to Sharon Springs for the baths, he said, but on the way back—"I says to myself if I'm already in Sharon Springs, why shouldn't I not drive to see Sam and Sylvia in Vermont? So I took a map and I drove."

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He described his solitary journey over the curving and precipitous mountain roads and the wee little villages they suddenly come out upon. He had stopped to inquire at lonely farmhouses where children run and hide at the sight of a stranger, at country stores so settled with ancient merchandise they might easier qualify as museums than places of business, at loggers' camps where chained dogs chafed to get at him and only some half-deaf creature in the guise of a human being quieted their howling and replied to his question in a language he found difficult to understand. He traveled on and on through roads that seemed to run through forests, he said, until he felt that he was approaching the end of the world.

"But only tell me one thing. Where did you find such a place?"

Good-naturedly he looked at our small camp and said, "So that's Porcupine Hotel!" as if he had heard all about it and in detail from Uncle Benny.

I replied that he was now looking at the only hotel in this wide America that did not practice discrimination, not only between blacks and whites or Jews and Christians, but between man and animals.

"Porcupines Welcome!" I pronounced aloud as if reading from a sign hung over our camp.

"And how's for Jews here?" asked Shloime, searching the solid ranks of green that circled up all around us.

"For Jews here is bad," I said, and told him that it was with much backache and other pains that we had plowed and planted a small garden in back of the house.

"We've got squash and cucumbers and lettuce and carrots. Even a few beans."

SHLOIME was eager to see the garden, and when we were there he kneeled down among the rows and admired each of the growing things in their flowering and tiny birth.

"So this is how pickles begins!" he said breathlessly, looking a little sadly at the yellow cucumber flowers and the prickly little things clinging to the vines. He had been handling vegetables all his life and never seen them in their first tenderness.

"So why is bad for the Jews here?" he continued, straightening up, full of admiration at what we were trying to do for ourselves and our children with our own hands.

Complainingly I told him that there were deer about everywhere and that they went into all other gardens and destroyed everything. "But they won't come into ours!"

"So it's anti-Semitic deer," said Uncle Shloime.

"But on the other hand," I said, "a porcupine has been keeping us up nights and chewing away at the floor and undermining our camp."

"So again anti-Semitism," declared Uncle Shloime, and he wanted to know if it was the same anti-Semite of the year before. We laughed heartily, but fulfilling nonetheless the Jewish need to discuss anti-Semitism no matter where you find yourself.

The foreground of our house had been considerably cleared since Uncle Benny's visit. Uncle Benny, he remarked, had exaggerated the condition of things.

"How much land like this you got?" he asked, pointing toward the woods.

I told him it was close to two hundred acres. He looked puzzled.

"I'm only a peddler, Sam, not a farmer."

So I tried to tell him what approximately was included in the size of an acre, but he said if I told him about how many trees we had he would have a better idea. Not too sure whether his tongue was against his cheek, I replied that I hadn't finished counting all my trees yet.

"Would you say you got a million?"

I hesitated and said that there might be that many.

"So why do you need so many trees, Sam?"

At a loss how to answer, I agreed that I did have a tree or two too many for ordinary comfort and that I was trying to reduce their number by at least the few I had been chopping down right in our own door yard. He seemed to be satisfied, and then said that all his life he had never been in a woods and that he would like to see big trees.

"Real big ones!"

Meanwhile he made a rapid calculation of the average worth of a tree and came up with the astounding conclusion that some day I would be a millionaire.

"A dollar a tree times a million trees is a million dollars!"

I TRIED to explain—we were now on the fringe of our woodland—that the best of

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the timber had been cut off before I had bought the place. We came to a pile of sawdust not far from our camp where the sawmill had been stationed. Shloime stopped short and in a voice full of astonishment and admiration cried, "Who gave it to you?"

"Gave what?"

"All that sawdust!"

Suppressing my desire to laugh, I said that it had come with the place.

"That's worth a fortune!" he cried. "You know what you can do with sawdust?"

I confessed that I didn't and he began telling me that in Germany, where nothing is wasted, they were compressing sawdust into wood brickettes to burn in fireplaces.

"You could sell 'em a dollar a dozen!"

"Don't forget the *matzeves,* the gravestones, from those boulders, Shloime. There's another fortune in that!"

He looked doubtfully at me, this financial wizard who turned everything he saw into solid gold.

We came to an old maple, gnarled and twisted and pruned by wind and lightning and still gigantic as it stood unfit for lumber amid the slash and devastation the choppers had left behind. Shloime backed away from its enormous bulk and asked me for an estimate of its age. I guessed about two hundred years.

"A man is like nothing," he philosophized, sadly staring up into its tower of green. I showed him a tall tulip tree and he bent way back to see its top. Before a young birch he went into an ecstasy as he felt the soft smooth bark. His hand fondled the trunk while he gave voice to all the traditional Jewish sentiments about nature, with which he was totally unfamiliar, so that for a moment he appeared to be the symbol of our own Jewish people struggling to return to its forgotten heritage. But so strong was the habit of a lifetime, that everything he saw he valued first for the money it could bring in, and only afterwards for its own self as a force in the creation from which we as Jews had been separated for ages. Even the wild mushrooms on the floor of the woods did not escape his eye, and while he remarked on their color and bizarre configuration, he also said that if I learned to tell the edible from the poisonous I could make myself a tidy sum of money during the summer.

"The price of mushrooms is something terrible!"

Our walk through the woods came to a sudden end when I heard Sylvia and the children calling. Their voices, loud and insistent, at first were frightening, although they themselves did not sound frightened. Nevertheless I doubled my pace, warning Shloime to watch his footsteps or he'd be snagged by branches of trees lying under the bramble that always springs up in cut-over woods. We soon saw Larry running toward us, who told us with great excitement that a woodchuck had been trapped in our garden.

"He's ruining everything, Daddy!"

Shloime wanted to know what was a woodchuck and Larry was too excited to explain.

"He's caught by a leg and he's dragging the log up and down the garden trying to get away."

We reached the garden and saw Sylvia standing on the log now and the worried animal, in a steel trap that I had nailed to the log, tugging at the chain and circling in an effort to escape.

Larry hollered he'd get the "persuader" and, dashing off to camp, returned with the long wooden club which Uncle Shloime regarded with horror.

"What are you going to do, Sam?"

"Kill him!" shouted Larry with barbaric delight.

"But what did he do you, that poor thing?" pleaded Uncle Shloime.

With cudgel upraised and my heart pounding I advanced on the trembling marauderer. Its accusing eye, filled with anger and fright, implored me for its life. But as if informed by instinct that its end was near it first poured forth ineffectual screeching noises that were supposed to terrify me, and failing to stop me it suddenly grew rigid as if in death; dying, it would seem, in order to avoid the agony of death, but inwardly still aware that it still must die.

"Give it to him on the snout!" screamed Larry.

In a harsh succession of needlessly violent blows I pounded out the life of the creature till the blood spurted from its eyes and the legs stopped twitching.

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"Enough! It's enough already!" cried Uncle Shloime and turned away from the sight. I dropped the club, but Larry rushed to pick it up and swinging at the carcass he screamed in a voice that did not resemble that of the gentle child I had raised in Flatbush, "There! That'll teach you to eat our garden!"

Suddenly our little Jerry broke into a loud sob.

"You've killed him! You're bad!" he screamed while his small fists beat at my legs.

I bent down to raise him but he ran off still sobbing into the house where he hid on his bed. Sylvia tried to soothe him, explaining that the woodchuck had been eating and destroying our food. But he kept on crying.

Uncle Shloime stood by and sighed. "This killing business," he said. "That's what I don't like."

He removed his wrist watch, his gold-framed sun glasses, and his fountain pen and bestowed them on Jerry who accepted all of them, quieted down, and fell asleep.

When I went back to free the limp body of the woodchuck from the trap in the garden, Uncle Shloime stood over me.

"God gives life," he solemnly began.

I interrupted him, saying that I knew what he was going to tell me.

"But Sam," said he, "on account of a few vegetables you make yourself into an Esau."

IN THOSE days before the war, I found it a bitter business making my own incursions into the kingdom of living creatures and deciding for myself what was needful killing and what was needless. The first time I brought my cudgel down on a porcupine, I felt just as miserable as Uncle Shloime, and it was a long time before I realized that if I lived in tranquillity it was because people before me had subdued the wild life. For each animal that I killed I had to find a new justification. It was the same even with snakes that were not harmful. Sylvia couldn't stand the sight of them.

So I felt still impelled to explain to Uncle Shloime, as I did to myself, how at the beginning of each season it was necessary to clear the ground anew and to do a certain amount of killing to make the place habitable, to restore us, so to speak, to our place. I may also say for myself that at no time did I ever feel that the camp and all our land really belonged to us. I couldn't hook my thumb under my vest and crow that it was mine. You just couldn't. It was too overpowering. When we arrived early in the spring, with the dogwood and the few old fruit trees in bloom, everything seemed to be enacting a secret rite at which we felt like intruders. Not until I had chopped and hacked and shot for a week straight did we seem to wrest from nature the right to become again a part of the landscape and the life. Not until I came back from the war, where I had been taught the scientific killing of human beings, did I learn to destroy life without being each time deeply disturbed. I can recall how I used to sweep up the dead flies and spiders in the camp and how it affected me with a strange sense of mortality to find them by the hundreds on the window sills. Hunter and hunted both were dead from the winter's kill.

"But if you believe that life is holy," argued Uncle Shloime.

"In the woods and on the farm," I said, "the only thing holy is your own life and the life of your family. Everything that threatens you or devours what you yourself need, forfeits its existence."

"But it says thou shalt not kill."

"That means wanton killing. Even hunting is necessary. If you lived here you would see it."

I did not tell him the story of the bears for fear he would not sleep that night.

BUT he did not sleep anyway.

During the night I was aroused by the sawing of the porcupine. I lay still, hoping it would not wake Uncle Shloime.

"Is that it?" he asked, quite amiably.

Our conversation, soft to begin with, soon woke up Larry, and that young Indian never learned how to suppress himself. Sylvia woke. If I didn't get rid of that pest below, she warned, she'd go crazy.

"Three nights now in a row," she cried. Her disposition, I must say, has never been as pleasant in the middle of the night as in the noon of day.

"So do something, Sam!" Uncle Shloime urged.

My rifle was useless and my club too short. Larry wanted to crawl in under the house but I wouldn't hear of it.

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We beat on pots and pans and stomped on the floor. Then we went out and Larry played the long searchlight under the joists and kept hollering that he saw him. Finally I said to Uncle Shloime that if he would hold the cudgel ready and if Larry would shine the light under I would try to shoot and perhaps frighten the porcupine away. Uncle Shloime took up the cudgel, and said *"Shema Yisroel,"* and asked what he was to do with it.

"Kill him!" shouted Larry.

The shooting did dislodge the pest. I shouted to Shloime to go after him, but it was dark except where Larry threw the light. I myself didn't dare to fire in the dark and Uncle Shloime didn't seem to know how to strike a porcupine. He got lots of advice from all sides.

"I see him! I see him!" he hollered and brought his cudgel down on a stone.

The camp became quiet again and we all fell asleep, only to be roused again toward dawn. This time Shloime grabbed the cudgel without being asked.

"I'll kill that rotten face!" he uttered with surprising determination.

We repeated our attack, and this time, with daylight coming in, we rid ourselves of our nuisance.

When it lay dead Uncle Shloime stood mournfully and looked at the hedgehog.

"So that's a porcupine," said he, and he thanked God that in Flatbush they didn't have porcupines.

To my family in Brooklyn Shloime brought back glowing reports of our life in Vermont, and although my father and mother never came to see us, their anxiety was reduced. We continued coming to Vermont every summer until the war put an end to my long vacations. In North Carolina, where I trained, my Vermont experience came in handy in talking to the boys from Kentucky and Tennessee. I even met up with a West Virginian who had chopped logs for a pulp company not far from our camp.

It was five years before I was back home, and during all that time Sylvia never could get enough gasoline coupons together to drive up with the boys. We were quite excited about going back, and during my first spring vacation from school the family piled into the jeep. Expecting to find the place all overgrown we arrived with axes, saws, a new .22 rifle for Larry, and a 30-30 for me.

Never shall I forget the shock and the groan of horror and bitterness that rose up from all of us. Nothing but the chimney was left. The old iron stove stood rusty and split in the open, and the frame of our icebox was twisted. The metal beds were twisted and the wood lay charred in a circle. Hunters must have broken in and overheated the flues.

We drove back in heavy-hearted silence.

"Heaven be blessed!" cried my mother on hearing the news from us.

Never before had I been rude to her. My father moved in between us.

"You still don't understand, my son," he said quietly, and added that Jews had made their choice long ago.

"It's either Esau or Jacob, and we have chosen Jacob," he said mildly, and then without reproof but in a voice that grew steadily vibrant he assured me that because I had chosen to be like the rest of the *goyim* God was against it.

"We are a chosen people," he said with mounting fervor.

"Chosen my eye!" I cried in a voice that he must have thought blasphemous. "If the hunters had not broken in!"

"God sent them," he said firmly. "God sends everything."

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

THE SONG AT THE RED SEA

The Midrash Says . . . .

JEWISH legend has it that the song the Israelites sang after crossing the Red Sea and seeing Pharaoh's host overwhelmed was "the second of the nine songs that in the course of history Israel sang to their God." The tenth and final song will be the grand paean that Israel shall raise at their final deliverance.

We print the Song at the Red Sea below, followed by two Midrashim (quoted from the Soncino translations): one explaining that God required the angels to give first place to His children in singing the song of triumph; and the other showing God as restraining the angels from singing at the escape of the Israelites, for the Egyptians, also His creation, were being drowned, and shall there be rejoicing in heaven at the downfall of any of His children?

These two Midrashim wonderfully illustrate the tension in Judaism between the particular Jewish and the universal. It is often argued whether Judaism is the one or the other; it is neither, but both.—ED.

THEN sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spoke, saying:

I will sing unto the Lord, for He is highly exalted;
The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.
The Lord is my strength and song,
And He is become my salvation;
This is my God, and I will glorify Him;
My father's God, and I will exalt Him.
The Lord is a man of war,
The Lord is His name.
Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea,
And his chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea.
The deeps cover them—
They went down into the depths like a stone.
Thy right hand, O Lord, glorious in power,
Thy right hand, O Lord, dasheth in pieces the enemy.
And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou overthrowest them that rise up against Thee;
Thou sendest forth Thy wrath, it consumeth them as stubble.
And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were piled up—
The floods stood upright as a heap;
The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea.
The enemy said:
"I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil;
My lust shall be satisfied upon them;
I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them."
Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them;
They sank as lead in the mighty waters.
Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the mighty?
Who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?
Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand—
The earth swallowed them.
Thou in Thy love hast led the people that Thou has redeemed;
Thou hast guided them in Thy strength to Thy holy habitation.
The peoples have heard, they tremble;
Pangs have taken hold on the inhabitants of Philistia.
Then were the chiefs of Edom affrighted;

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The mighty men of Moab, trembling taketh
hold upon them;
All the inhabitants of Canaan are melted
away.
Terror and dread falleth upon them;
By the greatness of Thine arm they are as
still as a stone;
Till Thy people pass over, O Lord,
Till the people pass over that Thou hast
gotten.
Thou bringest them in, and plantest them
in the mountain of Thine inheritance,
The place, O Lord, which Thou hast made
for Thee to dwell in,
The sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands
have established.
The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

For the horses of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought back the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea.

And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam sang unto them:

Sing ye to the Lord, for He is highly
exalted:
The horse and his rider hath He thrown into
the sea.

Midrash Rabbah

THEN SANG MOSES (Exod. 15:1). It is written: *The singers go before, the minstrels follow after* (Ps. 58:26). R. Johanan said: When the angels desired to chant song before God on that night when Israel crossed the sea, the Holy One, blessed be He, prevented them, saying, "My legions are in distress and you wish to utter song before Me?" Hence does it say, *And one came not near the other all the night,* as it is written, *And one called unto another and said* (Isa. 6:3, in reference to the cherubim). As soon as the Israelites emerged from the sea, the angels rushed in to be the first to utter song before God, but God said: "Let my children be the first to do so." Hence it does say, *Then Sang Moses.*

Gemara

R. JOSHUA B. LEVI cited the text: *And it shall come to pass that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, so the Lord will rejoice over you to cause you to perish* (Deut. 28:63). He said: Now does the Holy One, blessed be He, rejoice in the downfall of the wicked? Is it not written, *"as they went out before the army, and say, Give thanks unto the Lord for his mercy endureth for ever"* (II Chron. 20:21); and R. Johanan said: Why are the words "for he is good" omitted from this thanksgiving? Because the Holy One, blessed be He, does not rejoice in the downfall of the wicked? And R. Johanan further said: What is the meaning of the verse, *And one came not near the other all the night* (Exod. 14:20—referring to Pharaoh and Israelites at the Red Sea)? The ministering angels wanted to chant their hymns but the Holy One, blessed be He, chided them, saying, "My creatures are being drowned in the sea, and shall you chant hymns?" R. Eleazar replied: He himself does not rejoice, but He makes others rejoice. [Megillah 10b]

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ON THE HORIZON

NOVEL OF THE TRIPLY DIVIDED JEW

Alfred Memmi's "Statue of Salt"

EDOUARD RODITI

WHETHER Arab or Berber, Mohammedan or Jewish, many of the intellectuals of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia seem to be doomed, in their political activities as in their literary efforts, to a peculiar kind of frustration. No longer content with the traditional culture of the Islamic world, already disappointed by much that the West once offered them, they must yet borrow from 19th-century French liberalism the ideas that now inspire their nationalist campaigns against French colonial policies. Whether in fiction or philosophy, in poetry or political thought, they no longer find their native Arabic an adequate linguistic vehicle for their autonomous thoughts and emotions. They must resort to French, the language of their secondary schools and of all their higher education.

In a recently published autobiographical novel, *La Statue de Sel* ("The Statue of Salt"), a young Jewish writer from Tunis, Albert Memmi, describes some of the inner conflicts that this characteristic ambivalence entails. To Western Jews, the cultural conflict that Memmi examines in the context of his own life and experiences will seem not altogether new, but it is unique in one respect—the painful trichotomy of Jewish, French, *and* Islamic cultures has imposed a third horn, so to speak, unknown to the literature of the dualism of American Jewish life, from Ludwig Lewisohn's *The Island Within* to Saul Bellow's *Augie March*. Thus Memmi's predicament is more complex than that of most of the Westernized North African writers of his generation who are now meeting with such success in the Paris literary world.

One thinks particularly of the number of outstanding Algerian novelists who have dramatized the conflict of French and Islamic culture. Mainly of Berber Kabyle extraction, among them are Mohammed Dib, Mouloud Feraoun, and Mouloud Mammeri.

AS A matter of fact, French North Africa, Egypt, and the Levant had already, before 1939, contributed occasional new talents to the increasingly kaleidoscopic pattern of contemporary French literature: the Chris-

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SURGENT nationalism in French North Africa has been almost entirely Arab, and amid the turmoil one is likely to lose sight of the native Jews in that area, whose position between the contending parties has today become more problematical than ever. Seldom has any member of this Jewry talked directly in literature for himself and his fellow Sephardim. Alfred Memmi's novel, *La Statue de Sel* (Statue of Salt), is the first such expression, and constitutes something of an occasion in the Jewish culture of our day. Here EDOUARD RODITI tells us about the book, the circumstances of its writing and the reception it got in Paris, where it was published by Editions Correa in 1953 and got a literary prize. (Criterion Books plans to bring it out in this country in the spring of this year.) Mr. Roditi, who has appeared in these pages previously, was born in Paris in 1910 of American parents and educated in France, England, and this country. He has contributed to numerous magazines and published two books, *Oscar Wilde* (1947) and *Poems, 1928-1948* (1949) both under New Directions' imprint. Having served as an interpreter at the Nuremberg war criminal trials, and at the San Francisco Conference in 1945, he now works in France as a free-lance writer.

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tian Berber poet and critic Jean Armouche, the Levantine Christian novelist Albert Cosseri from Egypt, the Lebanese Christian poet Georges Schéhadé, and the Jewish novelists Ades and Josipovici, and Elian Finbert, also a Jew, from Egypt. But North African literary work dealing with the cultural conflict actually arose only after 1945, when Albert Camus and Emmanuel Robles, both of them Frenchmen from Algeria, began to prove themselves unusually generous and humane friends and patrons to all deserving young writers from across the Mediterranean. Among these, the best known are Mammeri and Feraoun, young Berber intellectuals from the Kabyle area of Algeria; Dib, an Algerian Arab with a name that is very frequent among the Coptic Christians of Egypt, concerns himself, like Cosseri, with the problems of the underprivileged Arab, the "poor white" of an Islamic economy that recognizes a difference between Arab and Berber.

Like these fellow Algerians, Albert Memmi writes in French rather than in his native tongue, which is a colloquial Berber-Arabic *patois* that has no literary tradition and can serve the purposes, at best, of local journalism. Like Dib, Mammeri, and Feraoun again, Memmi is a graduate of the French school system in which he now works as a teacher.

In his autobiographic novel, Memmi tells us repeatedly that his hero, Alexandre Mordekhai Benillouche, acquired his knowledge of French only at school, that Judeo-Arabic and Berber-Arabic were the native tongues of his childhood, and that his accent and intonation, when he now speaks French, still reveal his North African origin. Memmi also identifies his hero and the latter's family repeatedly as Orientals and Africans, even as Berbers or Bedouins, rather than as Europeans. His hero's family name, Benillouche, meaning "son of the lamb," is of Berber-Arabic origin; Benillouche refers to his own Jewish mother affectionately as *"cette Bedouine"* and stresses her Berber profile and the lean Bedouin appearance of her brothers; and the author refers, with some pride, to his hero's "pure" accent when he speaks Arabic, without the nasal twang and the drawl of most North African Jews of the more populous urban ghettos. *La Statue de Sel* is moreover full of folklore and superstitions, especially phallic beliefs and fears of the evil eye, that are common to Memmi's own Jewish background and to the Mohammedans, mainly of Berber stock, among whom the Jews of North Africa have long lived. Memmi even attaches more importance to his hero's flirtation with an idealistic Néo-Destour socialist group of young Mohammedan intellectuals who sought to enlist him as a Jewish "native son" in their "Africa for the Africans" movement, than to any Zionist aspirations that he may, from time to time, have entertained.

But Memmi's loyalty to his native Barbary Coast is not wholehearted. On the one hand, he rejects with horror every specific feature of his immediate cultural background, which is the bastardized commercial city of Tunis and its crowded ghetto. On the other hand, he repeatedly refers to some deeper and almost irrational heritage that transcends all recent history, including the French, Turkish, and Arab occupations of Tunisia, and seeks its roots in the land's legendary Berber past. The Kahena, the mythical Jewish queen of the Berbers who led them in their last successful revolt against the Arab invaders, seems to be Memmi's symbol of his attachment to his Berber ancestry.

This attachment, up to a point, means an affirmative response to a French cultural policy that tries to divide and assimilate, to detach racial, religious, and cultural minorities from the rigid Arab hierarchies in which they had become imprisoned. In Algeria, the Jews had thus been granted full French citizenship by a series of legislative measures that began as early as 1847; in Tunisia, the Maltese and other Christian settlers, and many Jews, were encouraged to adopt French citizenship in the years that preceded the Second World War; in Morocco, a Berber political movement to depose the Arab Sultan was successfully backed by the French in 1953; in Algeria, the Berbers of Kabylia have constantly been encouraged to adopt European culture and detach themselves from Islam and the Arab culture that had been forced upon them by the Mohammedan conquest of North Africa. Confused perhaps by the conflicts that this political and cultural policy can engender, Memmi seems to reject some of the realities of North Africa and to claim to be a native son of an idealized Barbary Coast that he has never known.

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La Statue de Sel begins by describing the timeless world of the hero's childhood, spent in a quiet alley of the slummy old Moslem city of Tunis, later in the heart of its even slummier ghetto. Alexandre Mordekhai Benillouche is born into a world of poverty, hunger, dirt, violence, disease, and fear. Only the family can protect the child against the outside world, a treacherous and unpredictable human ocean that rages in the street, where its storms can easily degenerate into pogroms. In the second section of the novel, Alexandre Mordekhai gradually acquires a consciousness of himself as an individual, increasingly detached, even alienated, from his family and social background. At the same time, he feels himself drawn even more strongly towards the world of the Occident that he discovers by attending French schools. His whole education is a hard struggle: to obtain scholarships, he must study at home in an overcrowded tenement, must deprive his family of the income that he might already be providing if he had been content to earn a modest living sooner as an apprentice to some artisan; he must also suffer countless humiliations outside the home when he tutors, for pocket money, the children of wealthier families.

Benillouche had hoped, at first, to become a physician, but the druggist benefactor who supplies the funds for his secondary-school studies advises him to be a pharmacist. Finally, abandoned by his benefactor, Benillouche chooses philosophy, planning to become a teacher in the French secondary-school system.

In the third section of the novel Benillouche sees, in his conflicts with the world and with contemporary history, all his brave illusions shattered. In the 1939 Tunis pogrom, he loses all hope for the integration of the native Jews as Tunisian citizens within a liberal and independent Moslem state: it might yet take centuries to educate the ignorant and degraded Mohammedan masses of the Oriental slums to the point where, no longer needing a scapegoat for their resentments, they might be ready to tolerate at all times the religious minorities that share their poverty. The behavior of the French upper class under the Nazi occupation of Tunis, and immediately after liberation, then deprives Benillouche of his faith in French citizenship and in the civilization of the Western democracies as solutions to the political and cultural problems of the North African ghetto. Finally, the stagnation of the ghetto itself and the opportunism of those Jewish leaders who manage to escape from it undermine Benillouche's faith in any spiritual or moral resources that might yet revive the parched vine of North African Jewry.

In German-occupied Tunis, in the forced-labor camps of the torrid South, in the black-market economy of liberated Tunis, Benillouche encounters, among Jews, only selfishness, pettiness, corruption, cynicism, ignorance. After liberation he tries indeed to join the French fighting forces, but is rejected because of his status as a native Jew, a subject of the "neutral" Protectorate—though he would probably have been rejected, in any case, on account of his tuberculosis. In protest against the Vichy anti-Semitic laws, Benillouche had previously resigned from the teaching profession instead of waiting to be fired; now, this resignation remains effective and he can no longer be reinstated when a new law reappoints all those who had been fired as a consequence of the earlier law. He can still, of course, resume his studies to become a high-school philosophy instructor. This he does but, when he at last takes his exams, Benillouche experiences a kind of blackout: instead of writing an academic discussion of the influence of Condillac on John Stuart Mill, he realizes that all his frustrated ambitions have ceased to mean anything to him. He is interested henceforth in only one philosophical problem, that of solving his own intimate difficulties, of knowing and understanding himself as a Jew of the ghetto who has ceased to be what he was and has failed to become what he set out to be.

In the end, Benillouche no longer sees any salvation for himself as an individual in any group or community, and decides to emigrate, of all places, to Argentina, a land of brash promises that offers only material advantages and can therefore disappoint less bitterly than other lands that promise more. Actually, Memmi himself, the author of the novel, subsequently completed his studies in Algiers and in Paris, then returned to Tunis, where he now teaches philosophy, happily married to a teacher of German

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whom he met in Paris. But he has deliberately confused himself, as author, with the hero of his autobiographical novel, and many Paris critics were fooled by this, and puzzled or shocked by Memmi's grotesque choice of the Argentine as his ultimate haven.

The relation of Alexandre Mordekhai Benillouche to Memmi himself is indeed of the same order as that of the "I" of Proust's autobiographical masterpiece to its author, and the relation of Benillouche's idealized Argentine to any real country is that of Proust's Albertine to the "rough-trade" taxi driver who, in real life, inspired this great love. Only once—on page 100—does Memmi reveal his own true identity: "son of a Jew of Italian origin and a Berber woman." Otherwise, throughout this book which is barely fictional, he presents himself always as Alexandre Mordekhai Benillouche, a young North African of strictly native Jewish extraction.

In its structure too, like *Remembrance of Things Past, La Statue de Sel* begins where it ends, with the hero setting out to write his own autobiography. In analyzing the problems that beset a young Tunisian Jewish intellectual in his painful evolution from the obsolete culture of the ghetto towards an elusive goal that he avoids ever defining too clearly, Memmi indicates that this goal, in spite of all its apparent promises of integration within Islamic or Western culture, must finally reveal itself as merely the Socratic "Know thyself." Memmi disassociates himself indeed as consciously from the Jewish past of the North African ghetto as from the Jewish future proposed by the Zionists, or from the mirages offered by the Western world or the Mohammedan liberals. In the end, as a kind of philosophical anarchist, he seeks only to understand his own self. It is significant that *La Statue de Sel* has been published in Paris in the same specialized series as the French translations of Henry Miller's *The World of Sex,* Milton "Mezz" Mezzrow's *Really the Blues,* and Malcolm Lowry's *Underneath the Volcano.*

As one closes Memmi's novel, one understands the significance of its title. Like Lot's wife fleeing Sodom in its hour of destruction, Memmi's hero turned back to view once more his own past. For having disregarded the divine warning to look only ahead, he has now been turned to a pillar of salt, as if petrified by the tears of his own grief, a monument already isolated from the rejected past, but excluded, too, from the promised future. He has turned his back on Islam, on Judaism, and also on the almost agnostic "Gentile" culture that France offers indiscriminately to Christian, Mohammedan, and Jew.

In Zionism, like many a young Sephardic Jew from the Islamic world, Benillouche saw only a romantic Ashkenazic passion for an Orient that he himself knew too well, and hated and feared: Israel may become but a bigger and better ghetto, surrounded by even more hostile and powerful Arabs than is the Hara of Tunis. Is it surprising that Benillouche then decides to emigrate to this legendary Argentine of which he knows only that it is "rich"? He had already rejected all other lands that might propose themselves as havens, whether the United States or Soviet Russia, whether Paris or the new Jerusalem. In one of his concluding chapters, Memmi describes, as lucidly as Scott Fitzgerald, some of the more disturbing symptoms of his spiritual and cultural "crack-up": "I am no longer able to forget myself, no longer capable of thinking of anything but myself. I can no longer abstract myself from this essential search: any other consideration would be a luxury."

"My destiny," Memmi affirms in the end, "is eternally to break away. . . . I did not encounter my misfortune by chance, on my way, and I cannot forget it by hastening ahead. The more I discover myself, the better I recognize my own misfortune; to put an end to it would mean putting an end to myself, in death or madness." A dispassionate reader might think Memmi's book insane or suicidal in its conclusions and, according to the standards of "mental hygiene," hysterical and politically immature. But let him try living, before passing judgment, in a North African ghetto, in a *hara* of Tunisia or a *mellah* of Morocco: in his excellent sociological and historical survey of North African Jewry, *Les Juifs d'Afrique du Nord,* (Paris, 1952), André Chouraqui has described with indisputable authority the living conditions in some of these real concentration camps, the world in which tens of thousands of young Jews now learn, in their schools, about the wonders of democracy,

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progress, science. The hideous contrast between what they learn and what they experience each day is enough to confuse and embitter their whole lives.

NEUROTIC symptoms of all sorts abound in Memmi's book. But have they all been expressed unintentionally, and are we justified in attributing them to the author himself? The book's title alone might indicate that he views his hero's neurotic problems very objectively: as a philosopher, Memmi has specialized in the study of psychological problems and is well aware of the implications of Freudian theory. The *rigor mortis* of the pillar of salt may indeed symbolize the suicide of a fictional character who, no longer willing to face, as the author has done, the intolerable present, has turned back towards the past, preferring to exist, if at all, only as a memory among memories, a stone turned to stone by the Medusa-stare of stones, an advanced schizophrenic in a statuesque catatonic pose.

For all its lack of artful expression and poetic imagery and diction, *La Statue de Sel* exemplifies a kind of unity of structure that is strictly poetic and can be found only in great myths and in profound individual experiences. It is, to the serious Jewish reader, a document of as great historical or human significance as the autobiographical *Exemplar Humanae Vitae* of Spinoza's forerunner, the Portuguese Jewish suicide, Uriel Acosta. Reverting from Catholicism, imposed upon his family by the Portuguese Inquisition, to the Jewish faith of his ancestors that he hoped to practice freely in Holland, Acosta had found, in his exile, only intolerance. Breaking away from the stagnation of the Orient, Benillouche is similarly disappointed by the merely opportunistic freedom that the Western world seems to offer him. It is perhaps the destiny of a certain type of Sephardic intellectual, less of a "joiner" than Jews from Northeastern Europe, eternally to break away, to find himself again and again by losing himself.

BUT Memmi has refused to abstract his personal problem from that of the Tunisian Jewish ghetto as a whole, the problem of the ghetto from that of North African Jewry as a whole, and the problem of North African Jewry from that of North Africa as a whole in its relations with France and the Western world. Memmi understands that there is no longer a single North African problem that can be solved neatly by some bright braintruster, no North African Jewish problem that can be solved by merely Jewish means, by sending in some social workers who have graduated from the best American schools. Even in Israel, we have seen immigrants from the *mellahs* of Morocco and the *haras* of Tunisia bring in their trail a North African problem similar to the one now created, in Paris, by the presence of so many immigrant Mohammedan laborers.

Like the problem of the South in the United States, the North African problem, as its solution is delayed, begins to proliferate and to breed new problems: the problem of the immigrant North African laborer, who in metropolitan France settles in slums that are similar to those of the Mexican "men without women" in some American cities; the problem of a vastly increased population in North Africa deprived of the necessary agricultural or industrial outlets for its energies and of proper schooling or skills to absorb its unemployed in a modern economy; the problem of the hundreds of thousands of European colonists in the protectorates of Tunisia and Morocco, now that these areas are demanding a national independence that might no longer tolerate the presence of such privileged minorities; the problem of peaceful integration and "co-citizenship" in Algeria, where Jew, Christian colonist, and Mohammedan are expected gradually to merge politically in a melting pot where all will enjoy, in the long run, equal rights, duties, and opportunities.

Within each one of these problems, there is also a Jewish problem. In recent years, for instance, the Paris Jewish community has observed that there are more and more North African Jews among the immigrant laborers from Algeria who flock to France to find work in the automobile plants of the Paris area. Not only is unemployment now affecting the Jewish artisans of Algeria almost as severely as their agricultural Mohammedan neighbors, but the latter also seem to attract to Paris, in their train, a host of North African Jewish moneylenders and old-clothes dealers, restaurateurs, and interpreters, who cater in France to their specialized needs just as in Oran or Constantine, and act

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also as intermediaries between the Arabic-speaking slum-dwellers of Menilmontant and Gennevilliers and the French-speaking world of employers and officialdom, of police courts and social services.

Islam has indeed marked its Jews as indelibly as the Christian world has marked its own. The Jew of Tunis, with his Turkish coffee and his *boukha* (fig liquor), his *boutargue* (sun-dried mullet roes) and his *cous-cous,* is now as native to North Africa as the Russian Jew with his tea and his *borsht,* his *gefilte fish* and his *kasha,* was to Eastern Europe. To ignore such differences of fare and folklore, habits and beliefs, would indeed be foolish, and the Ashkenazic Jews who so idealistically promoted, a few years ago, the emigration of Tunisian, Moroccan, and Iraqi Jews to Israel are often as ill at ease today with these exotic *shvarze* neighbors as they once were with the Palestinian Arabs. The Tunisian Jewish tailor, on the other hand, is certainly less ill at ease with the Mohammedan cobbler who works beside him in the covered bazaar of Djerba than with an American or German social worker who tries to explain to him that there is little use in trying to cure an epileptic child by "protecting" it against the evil eye wtih blue porcelain beads.

It is no accident that French readers have long been so passionately devoted to the "existentialist" South that they discover in the novels of Faulkner, Caldwell, and Eudora Welty; nor is it an accident that Albert Camus, Frenchman from Algiers, should have chosen Faulkner as one of his masters. North African life, with its violence and its contrasts, can already inspire the same kind of literature as our Deep South, the same sense of the doom and the sheer beauty of being, of its tragedy and its lyrical poetry. So far this sense of tragedy has expressed itself mainly in the writing of Frenchmen such as Camus and Emmanuel Robles, the "whites" of France's new South, and the poetry of North African life in the more lyrical and elegiac writings of Dib, Mammeri, and Feraoun, its Mohammedan "blacks." In Memmi's autobiographical novel we now discover the anguish of those who, in this struggle for power, no longer have much to expect from either side and share neither the guilt-feelings of the French nor the nostalgia or national aspirations of the Mohammedans.

Though sometimes artlessly or even clumsily written, *La Statue de Sel* is thus an important document: for the first time in the century and more since the French landed in Algiers and began to assume the responsibility of emancipating the Jews of North Africa, a native North African Jew has now managed to find an audience, in metropolitan France, for a fictional work about an individual's successful but frustrating escape from the ghetto. After centuries of silence, Chouraqui's sociological report, *Les Juifs d'Afrique du Nord,* and Memmi's novel are North African Jewry's first outstanding contributions to Western literature.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

COMMUNISM, DEMOCRACY, AND THE CHURCHES

Problems of "Mobilizing the Religious Front"

WILL HERBERG

THE record of America's religious leaders in the struggle against Communism is hardly such as to give satisfaction to those concerned with the role of the churches in the nation's life. One does not have in mind the tiny (though not insignificant) fraction of clergymen who have been Communists or close fellow-travelers—the vast majority of the American clergy of all denominations have always been free of such sympathies. Yet it remains a fact that for all their sincere devotion to democratic and religious ideals, many representative spokesmen of American religion, particularly of Protestantism and Judaism, have exhibited a strange ambivalence in opposing Communism.

They have criticized its errors, condemned its brutalities and, under the urging of "outside" counsel, repudiated its fronts—but with a curious reluctance, not at all with the passionate zeal with which they denounced Nazism in the 1930's. Apparently, they have not felt impelled to take the lead in arousing the public conscience to the threat of Communist totalitarianism. By and large, religious leaders, however sincere, have been far less vehement against Communism than against "reaction" and "fascism" at home. Their sense of Communist immorality seems to be dulled by their abhorrence of the ex-Communist "turned informer." And whereas anti-fascism was regarded as a noble cause, anti-Communism is deprecated as "sterile" and "negative."

Indeed, what polemics they do launch against Communism tend to be disputes about doctrine, often sounding little different from disputations between denominations within the same church. Seldom does one get the sense that the opponent is not a mere individual dissenter or a deviant ideology but the agent or agency of "the worst hell of tyranny men have ever invented," as Reinhold Niebuhr has called it—an active conspiracy that maintains and advances itself by systematic mendacity and terror, by the obliteration of human rights, and by the literal extermination of the individuals and groups that oppose its will.

DESPITE all that has happened to peoples, and to churches as well, in so many countries, some of our religious leaders still seem

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A NUMBER of thinkers have been troubled by the lack of clarity and the division of counsel that have marked the struggle against Communism on the part of various religious groups. WILL HERBERG here reports and ponders upon a Washington conference of leaders, lay and spiritual, of the three faiths that gathered together to form a religious front against the Communist threat to our civilization. Mr. Herberg, himself a participant and quite sympathetic with the ends of the conference, highlights what seem to him the basic, continuing issues raised by the conference, and critically examines some proposed solutions. Mr. Herberg, who is the author of *Judaism and Modern Man: An Interpretation of Jewish Religion* (1951) and of *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* to be published by Doubleday this fall, is recognized as one of the most incisive and stimulating thinkers of the current religious "revival." His previous articles in COMMENTARY, both on religious and sociological subjects, have been nationally discussed, and he has also appeared in most of the leading religious and "opinion-molding" magazines in this country. He has lectured extensively at leading universities and seminaries in the United States.

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blind to the devices by which Communists entrap the unwary. Respectable church papers carry articles and reviews that would be more appropriate in the *Nation*, and there has hardly been a major church conference in recent years that has not adopted resolutions which, while denouncing Communism, give comfort to those opposing the active anti-Communist struggle. In short, no one with any first-hand knowledge of the dominant attitudes in the Protestant church and the Jewish synagogue would find much to challenge in the Reverend John Sutherland Bonnell's judgment that present-day religious leadership "lacks conviction, passion, and militancy in combating Communism." Though all acknowledge Communism to be the gravest threat Western civilization and Jewish-Christian faith have yet encountered, something somehow immobilizes them when they come face to face with Communism and takes the heart out of their fight against it.

It is hard to say just what it is that does this. Perhaps residual illusions of the "Social Gospel" are involved, perhaps the influence, too, of a prevailing type of secular progressivism in which American populist and Marxist conceptions are blended. After all, social-minded ministers who have been brought up to regard collectivism as somehow closer to the religious norm of love and brotherhood than any other form of economy can hardly help feeling an obscure sympathy for the Communist "idea" despite all the horrors of its actuality. For them, the clichés and slogans of a stereotyped, ritualistic liberalism take on all the majesty of prophetic utterance. Perhaps this contemporary kind of pseudo-prophetism is the largest single factor in confusing so many religious leaders and blunting their opposition to Communism.

But perhaps an even bigger factor is anti-Catholicism. I have myself heard an eminent Protestant leader say that one must be "careful" how one opposes Communism lest one "play into the hands of Rome." At the religious conference reported in this article, a labor man recalled bitterly that some years ago, when the CIO was fighting a recently expelled Communist-dominated union, some Protestant ministers lined up with the Communists on the ground that the CIO was backed by "the Catholics." There can be little doubt that the pervasive fear of Rome, fed by reports of the persecution of Protestants in Spain and Latin America, has vitiated the Protestant witness against Communism.

Among Jewish leaders the chief factor undoubtedly is the abiding abhorrence of Nazism and the fact that the Soviet Union was our ally against Hitler, at least during the period of American participation in the war. But both the factors I have mentioned—pseudo-prophetic "progressivism" and an ingrained mistrust of Catholicism—seem to be just as widespread as among the Protestant clergy. A report of the religious conference to which I have referred, published recently in a well-known Jewish weekly, noted that "the Roman Catholic hierarchy and laity were very much in evidence," and went on to warn that the movement "will bear watching by democratically oriented religious and community organizations." It is unfortunately true that a good deal of Catholic anti-Communism has been crude and uncritical. Much of it has consisted in oversimplified pictures of a "God-fearing" America confronting an "atheistic" and "materialistic" foe. The source of the peril in Communism has not always been clearly defined by Catholics and the alignment of forces has often been too narrowly drawn, to the virtual exclusion of secular humanists from the democratic camp. Nevertheless, American Catholicism has, on the whole, been unequivocal and effective in its opposition to Communism, and has indeed contributed much of the impulse that has made the trade union movement in America so solidly anti-Communist.

THE National Conference on the Spiritual Foundations of Our Democracy was an effort to break through the inhibitions and misconceptions that have hitherto weakened the religious witness against Communism. It was also an effort to effect a new consolidation of the religious front for democracy. In externals, the Washington conference seemed much like all such American religious conferences: it was earnest, idealistic, exhortative, abounding in piety and good will. But in one respect, at least, it was different: it was completely free, on the one side, from the kind of rhetorical vaunting of American democracy generally so popular at such gatherings; and, on the other, of that brand of indiscriminate devaluation of present-day American life which seems to make so many clergymen incapable of seeing the infinitely greater evil of Communist totalitarianism. It did not proclaim the United States to be the immaculate champion of God called on to enforce the American Way of Life

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upon a sinful world. Nor did it fall into the posture, so characteristic of many recent religious gatherings, of wringing its hands in pious anguish over the "Red-baiting" and "witch-hunting" presumed to be devastating our civil liberties. This fact alone would have been enough to endow the conference with a special quality, a quality that was further enhanced by the scope and seriousness of its discussions and the fundamental nature of the problems it raised.

THE conference was sponsored by the Foundation for Religious Action in the Social and Civil Order. Both Foundation and conference were conceived and promoted by three men quite different in temperament and background, Charles W. Lowry, Edward L. R. Elson, and Elton Trueblood.

Charles W. Lowry, an Episcopalian, two years ago resigned his rectorship at All Saints Church, Chevy Chase, Maryland, in order to establish the Foundation and direct its activities. Before that, he had been professor of theology at the Virginia Episcopal Seminary, one of the most highly regarded Protestant institutions in the country. While still with All Saints Church, he wrote a study of the contemporary confrontation of faiths, *Communism and Christ,* in which a good deal of the fundamental thinking behind the movement he was to launch was already in evidence. Dr. Lowry is a sophisticated theologian, but a man of action, too, with a deep sense of calling.

Edward L. R. Elson has for nine years been pastor of the National Presbyterian Church—"President Eisenhower's church"—in Washington. Between 1941 and 1946, he served as chaplain in the army. A gifted preacher and vigorous churchman, he is widely known as the author of *America's Spiritual Recovery.*

Elton Trueblood, one of the most distinguished of living Quakers, is the author of two important theological works, *The Predicament of Modern Man* and *The Logic of Belief,* and of half a dozen smaller works dealing with the meaning of faith amidst the perplexities of our time. Coming from the university chaplaincy at Stanford, he served for some years as professor of philosophy at Earlham College, the Quaker liberal arts school in Indiana. While retaining his connection with that institution, he has served since 1954 as chief of religious policy of the United States Information Agency. Dr. Trueblood is a layman, deeply concerned with the layman's vocation in the religious life of the modern world. Though not an officer of the Foundation for Religious Action—Lowry is chairman and executive director, Elson co-chairman—his influence in it is unmistakable.

The Foundation was established in November 1953 with a program emphasizing two major aims: "(1) to stress the importance of religious truth in the preservation and development of genuine democracy; and (2) to unite all believers in God in the struggle between the free world and atheistic Communism, which aims to destroy both religion and liberty." It was able to set up a National Advisory Council studded with distinguished and influential names, lay and clerical: Catholic Bishops Wright and Ready; Episcopal Bishops Powell and Tucker, Methodist Bishop Holt, together with such outstanding Protestant churchmen as Louis H. Evans, Billy Graham, Ralph Sockman, Norman Vincent Peale, and Frederick Brown Harris; Jewish leaders such as Judge Joseph M. Proskauer, Maxwell Abbell of the United Synagogue, and Rabbis Norman Gerstenfeld and Edgar F. Magnin; college presidents such as Gordon Gray of North Carolina, Theodore M. Hesburgh of Notre Dame, Robert L. Johnson of Temple, Benjamin E. Mays of Morehouse, George Shuster of Hunter, and W. R. White of Baylor; eminent laymen including Henry Ford II, Henry R. Luce, Herbert Hoover, AEC Commissioner Thomas E. Murray, William R. Castle, Charles Edward Wilson, President George Meany of the AFL, and others in all walks of life. Many of the members of the National Advisory Council were present at the conference, making clear by their active concern in the movement that the Foundation was something more than a mere letterhead organization.

WELL over two hundred people attended the sessions of the conference, which were held at the Sheraton-Carlton in Washington on November 8, 9, and 10, 1954. There was little formality about the occasion, but the program of the conference had been carefully arranged and on the whole was scrupulously adhered to. The sessions ran nearly twelve hours a day—almost continuously from 9:30 A.M., when the morning sessions began, to nine or ten in the evening, when the dinner meetings closed. The volume of talk was vast, and one cannot hope in a report like this to render even a fair summary of it. We shall try here

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only to outline the scope of the conference, and focus on some of the high points that seem to this writer most significant.

At the opening dinner meeting, addresses on "The Predicament of Our Age" were delivered by Thomas E. Murray of the Atomic Energy Commission and Albert T. Mollegen, professor at the Virginia Episcopal Seminary. Murray, a Roman Catholic layman, spoke of the terrible situation into which the atom bomb had driven mankind, and stressed that these very weapons were "bringing man to a realization that the basic human predicament lies deeper than the issues of life and death: it is to be found rather in man's eternal situation between good and evil." "The universal moral law," he emphasized, "must remain in undisputed control over atomic weapons. . . . A sense of personal responsibility must be recovered, the noble Christian concept of sacrifice must be recaptured."

Mollegen, a Protestant theologian, began in a sense where Murray left off. He strove to show that the predicament went deeper than could be envisaged from the standpoint of the natural law, for even with the best of intentions and with the utmost loyalty to the "universal moral law," we are so caught in the vise of contemporary history that whatever we do seems only to heighten our peril. The hydrogen bomb, on which the whole free world depends for its security against Soviet aggression, and which at the same time threatens us all with annihilation, is the symbol, at once tragic and ironic, of the predicament in which we find ourselves. Drawing upon Augustine, who also had to live through a deep crisis of history, Mollegen explored the resources of faith from which contemporary man might draw the insight and courage necessary to deal with the overwhelming responsibilities of our time.

These two addresses, so different and yet so alike in their deep concern, struck the keynote of the conference. The first plenary session, the next morning, heard a paper by this writer on "The Biblical Basis of American Democracy," which attempted to show that American democracy was rooted in the Biblical view of man, his "grandeur" and his "misery," his freedom and his responsibility; it traced the democratic conception of the constitutional limited-power state to the realism about human nature in politics derived from a Biblical understanding of human existence; and it warned against the temptation, so widespread today, of converting democracy into a religious absolute in order to have a dynamic faith with which to meet the challenge of Communism. The questions raised in the paper were vigorously discussed, at this and later sessions.

President Eisenhower spoke briefly at the luncheon meeting that followed. Immediately after, Senator Stuart Symington and Judge Matthew F. McGuire spoke in a laymen's panel on "God and Government." At the afternoon plenary session, the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame, presented a paper on "The Necessity of Faith in a Living Democracy." It was a carefully prepared and well thought-out statement of the Catholic position. He explicitly warned against "faith in a living democracy" being interpreted as one in which democracy was held to be "the object of our faith." The faith he was talking about, he said, was "vital religious faith, based upon the most secure foundation of God's word." The problem, then, was to provide a "bridge between religion and politics," because only if our commitment to democracy was grounded in something deeper and really ultimate would it be able to survive. Father Hesburgh drew on many sources in developing his thesis, but particularly on Jacques Maritain.

The dinner meeting that evening was devoted to a discussion of "Practical Steps for Strengthening American Democracy." Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin of Los Angeles spoke in his exuberant, "down-to-earth" manner; Thomas H. Mahony, a prominent Catholic jurist, presented a rather solid paper urging education; and Louis Evans, minister-at-large of the Presbyterian Church, exhorted the audience to defeat Communism by "lay infiltration" of Americans into foreign parts. This observer, at least, did not feel that much that was "practical" was brought forward at this session.

The last plenary session, on the morning of November 10, heard Dr. Lowry read a comprehensive paper on "Democracy's Answer to the Marxian Dialectic." Dr. Lowry presented a concise, learned view of Marxism as a politico-philosophical system, and then proceeded to examine "democracy's answer," which, he emphasized, could not be merely an academic refutation, but had to take the form of what might be called an "existential dialogue" in which the real sources of the Marxist dynamic are uncovered, its inadequacies and perversities revealed, and the "democratic faith" presented

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in its concreteness. "Democracy," Dr. Lowry asserted, was "first a faith; second, a political principle; third, an economic doctrine; and fourth, the vision of a good society." Each of these aspects he subjected to an analysis which opened many questions. The report culminated in an appeal for a "new social goal"—the "vision of a world society in which is posited a progressive solution of the basic material problems of mankind hitherto regarded as objectively beyond the capacity of the human race."

A CONFERENCE is too often merely the occasion for a platform to be presented and the official speakers to have their say. In this case, however, the assemblage (they were not exactly delegates, since they did not come representing their organizations) was of at least equal importance. It was full of vigor and character. There were plenty of clergymen and theologians present, but the laymen—educators, economists, businessmen, men high in the military and diplomatic service, labor leaders—made themselves heard to great effect. The majority of the participants were Protestants, but I think most observers would agree that (aside from the scheduled speakers) it was the Catholics who made the deepest impression. For one thing, they included men of the highest caliber—Gustave Weigel and John Courtney Murray, both Jesuits, and among the two most brilliant Catholic theologians in this country; George G. Higgins and John F. Cronin, assistant directors of the social action department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, two priests with a national reputation for their understanding of the social movements and ideologies of our time. These men, and others of their communion, spoke sparingly, but what they said was to the point. They were listened to with appreciation; indeed, I do not recall a serious conference touching controversial issues where relations between the various denominations were so free of strain and tension.

There was a sprinkling of Jews at the conference—such men as S. Andhil Fineberg of the American Jewish Committee, Eugene Lipman, director of social action of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and Philip Schiff of the National Jewish Welfare Board, in addition to those I have already mentioned as members of the National Advisory Council—but by and large the Jewish word was not heard. The writer contributed something, he hopes, and Isaac Franck of the Jewish Community Council in Washington impressed the audience with his forceful warning against the danger of "idolatrizing" religion itself. Beyond that there was very little heard from Jewish participants, which was unfortunate in view of the genuine eagerness one sensed to hear what American Jewry had to say about the problems of religion, Communism, and democracy.

Of particular interest at the conference was the participation of two labor leaders, Arthur G. McDowell of the AFL and John Ramsay of the CIO, both Protestants, who stirred the assemblage with sharp criticism of the equivocal attitude to Communism shown by sections of the Protestant clergy in past years. Generally noteworthy was the part played by laymen who tried to relate their special experience to the thinking of the conference.

As I have suggested, the conference's importance lay more in the questions it raised, and perhaps sharpened, than in any definitive solutions it offered. To this writer's mind, the major issues that emerged were four, and some account of these, as they shaped themselves at the conference, may prove instructive.

(1) *Communism as religion.* Each of the three speakers at the plenary sessions, and many of those who took part in the discussion, stressed the fact that Communism, while it confronts us immediately as a Moscow-directed international politico-military power bloc and conspiracy, gains much of its strength from the fact that it is, on the moral and spiritual level, something more. It is in its ultimate dimension a "secular religion" that provides its devotees with a complete system for understanding the world, past, present, and future; a cause and a commitment; a promise of fulfilment—in short, a vision of the absolute. Moreover, Communism is a direct if illegitimate offspring of the Judeo-Christian Messianic tradition. When science and modern life seemed to strip religion of its plausibility, the Western world's religious hope of redemption—the Messiah of the Jews and the Second Coming of the Christians—turned to all sorts of secular utopias, foremost among them being Communism. The dynamic of Communism is, then, in the last analysis, a religious dynamic, with an eschatological passion that only faith can give. This theme was stressed in Dr. Lowry's paper, but it appeared again and again throughout the discussions.

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But the conception of Communism as a faith or religion, valid as it is, tends to create certain dangerous confusions. Religion is highly regarded in America; if Communism is a religion, is it not therefore entitled to the freedom, toleration, and respect owing to all religions? Is not anti-Communism both futile—because religions, we are told, cannot be suppressed—and undemocratic—because democracy guarantees the freedom of religion?

Some such logic would seem to be responsible, in part at least, for the ambiguity and indecision of so much of the Protestant witness against Communism in the past, nor has it altogether disappeared from more recent church pronouncements and gatherings, including the Evanston Assembly of the World Council. Protestants are not alone in this confusion; many Jews share it, too, and also numerous "unbelievers" who uphold freedom of religion. All these groups tend to be immobilized in their resistance to Communism as soon as they begin to perceive that on a certain level it must be regarded as a religion of sorts.

What they do not understand, but what was made quite explicit at the Washington conference, is that while Communism in its ultimate dimension is indeed a religion, it is *also* a politico-military conspiracy, and a totalitarian political regime. Nor is it true that democracy prescribes toleration for *all* religions. Thugee was once a flourishing religious cult in India; its devotees waylaid and strangled certain kinds of travelers out of piety, dedicating their victims to Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction. Does anyone believe that democracy requires freedom for such a religion, even where, for the time being, it limits itself simply to preaching instead of acting on the duty and merit of strangling wayfarers? The British rigorously suppressed the Thugee sect in the 1830's, and it does not appear that they thereby limited real freedom of religion—though the problem of winning its devotees away from their pernicious faith still remained. The analogy with Communism is obvious.

All this was not made explicit, but it ran implicit through the entire discussion. The speakers in their papers, as well as the conference members from the floor, were able to discuss the religious aspect of Communism in a sober and restrained manner without forgetting for a moment that Communism confronts us in the first place as a political and military threat to our very existence.

(2) *Religion and democracy.* On another question, flowing directly from the conception of Communism as a religion—how shall we meet Communism on the religious level?—there was a good deal of hesitation and uncertainty. Taken as a whole, the challenge of Communism is multi-dimensional—military, political, spiritual. We know how to meet it on the front of military aggression and internal subversion. As against the totalitarian state, we offer the open democratic society. Democracy is thus our answer to Communism on the political level. But, as we have seen, Communism is also a faith and a commitment. With what do we meet it on this level? Meet it with something we must, if we do not want the battle for the souls of men to go by default. "The human spirit," Pascal has pointed out, "believes and loves so naturally that if it does not have true objects of faith and love, it will have faith in and love false things."

To meet the religious challenge of Communism, there has been a tendency in some liberal circles in the United States to make democracy itself into the object of a religious cult, in the hope of developing a spiritual dynamic with which to meet Communism on the ultimate level. Democracy, we are told, is not merely a social and political order, a *means* whereby men can fashion their lives in freedom and responsibility; it is itself an end, the Way of Life, the highest truth, the ultimate commitment of all free men. It is a religious absolute.

But the problem here is that once democracy converts itself into a religious absolute it transforms itself into something other than democracy—it becomes totalitarian; it also becomes idolatrous. As such it becomes repugnant alike to the true democrat and to the man of Jewish-Christian faith. To the democrat, democracy is instrumental; it involves "agreement on the good of man on the level of performance, without the necessity of agreement on ultimates," as the Harvard Committee Report on General Education in a Free Society puts it. To the man of faith, only God is absolute, and nothing that is not God, no matter how good, or true, or beautiful, can lay claim to ultimacy. Both the man of faith and the democrat—who are of course often the same man—share the conviction of the "free American citizen," in the words of Elliot Cohen, that "whether he professes to believe in God or professes not to believe in God, he has a conviction that there is no god but God. . . . [Whatever he may

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believe, the 'free American citizen'] does *not* believe that there is any idea, institution, or individual—a man, a nation, or an 'ism'—that man can accept as God. . . ." (COMMENTARY, September 1952).

At the Washington conference there was much talk about "faith in democracy" which very easily turned into advocacy of "democracy as a faith." But there was also sharp protest against this attitude on both religious and democratic grounds. Such protest was voiced in Father Hesburgh's as well as this writer's paper, and in many comments from the floor. Gustave Weigel, the Jesuit theologian, put it this way: "My religious faith impels me to affirm and support democracy, but democracy is not my religious faith." This statement, I think, expressed the prevailing view of those participating in the conference.

How, then, is Communism to be met on the ultimate level? There was very little direct discussion of this question at the conference, but what there was made it clear that only a transcendent faith that finds its absolute *beyond* the ideas, institutions, or allegiances of the world could meet the challenge of the demonic idolatry of Communism without falling into idolatry itself. To be genuinely democratic, in this writer's view, democracy cannot refuse to recognize a majesty beyond its own, the majesty of the God who transcends all the relativities of the world and beside whom there is no other.

(3) *Religion as "cure-all."* The American religious mind has always been prone to an oversimple idealism which regards religion as primarily a matter of high ideals whose mere evocation brings peace of mind, moral regeneration, and social progress and reform. This faith in religion—which is by no means the same as religious faith in God—has been intensified by the widespread disillusionment with the secular utopias that only a generation ago were promising universal redemption through economics and politics. As a result, there is a strong disposition—in the new enthusiasm for religion that has gripped the American people—to think of religion as a cure-all that makes critical scrutiny of social institutions or any constructive thinking about social problems supererogatory.

There is no denying that this attitude, too, made itself felt at the conference. Dr. Lowry warned against it in the preliminary material and in his remarks early in the sessions. "We are undoubtedly in the midst of a widespread and powerful revival of religion," he said. "There is, however, a real danger of this spiritual current running up a steep wall of compulsive escapism and becoming a giant pool of stagnation and futility instead of a vital tide of constructive energy and new creative work." Despite this warning, the naive "religionism" so characteristic of the American religious mind cropped up again and again in the exhortations that came from both clergy and laymen on the floor of the conference.

Indeed, there was so much of this kind of religious utopianism at certain points of the proceedings that several men present felt it necessary to raise their voice in reiterated warning. Particularly effective were the admonitions uttered by the Reverend George G. Higgins of the National Catholic Welfare Conference and by Isaac Franck of the Jewish Community Council in Washington. Father Higgins pointed out that religious faith is not a substitute for constructive social thinking and realistic dealing with social problems, but rather (in this area at least) an indispensable moral and intellectual resource for meeting our responsibilities in the world. Mr. Franck, in impressive words, cautioned against turning religion into a new idolatry by getting into the habit of looking to it to resolve all our difficulties and to restore all our threatened securities. These admonitions were heard with attention, but I do not think they were quite understood by some of the members of the conference, so strong is the strain of pietism and "faith in faith" in American religion. It would seem that this is a problem which those who are striving to bring out the authentic meaning of Jewish-Christian faith in its relevance to life will have to grapple with more effectively than they have hitherto done.

(4) *Religious front for democracy.* The most basic question which the conference raised was not raised at it but rather *by* it. It will be remembered that one of the primary aims of the Foundation for Religious Action, which conceived and sponsored the conference, was "to unite all believers in God in the struggle between the free world and atheistic Communism, which aims to destroy both religion and liberty." There is no doubt that the basic idea of the conference was the conviction, which this writer shares, that the believer may find

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in Jewish-Christian faith both a deeper understanding of democracy and a powerful spiritual dynamic with which to meet and overcome Communism on the religious level. Nonetheless, this view raises a question which requires clarification.

Is it either possible or desirable to build an ideological front in defense of democracy purely on religious grounds, drawing the line between those who "believe in God" and those who do not? The Foundation program does not propose this, nor did the conference officially, but something of the sort seemed to run as a strong undercurrent in the discussion at many points in the sessions. And the implications of this position seemed far from being fully understood or appreciated.

It is one thing to say that no real justification for our kind of democracy or real dynamic in its defense against Communist totalitarianism is possible that does not draw upon the insights and resources of Jewish-Christian faith; it is another and vastly different thing to say that only those who explicitly avow this faith can be included in the democratic front against Communism. The first statement seems to be basically true, the second manifestly and dangerously false. For even those who do not themselves explicitly "believe in God" or affirm Jewish-Christian faith may be filled with the insights and moral passion that this faith has brought forth. Men—thank God—are often better than their official philosophies, and many a secular liberal who brashly proclaims himself without God may well be doing God's work. In the book of Isaiah, God is represented as speaking of the pagan Cyrus: "I have girded him though he has not known me." What was said of Cyrus may surely be true of many of the secular liberals of our time; perhaps God has girded them though they have not known him.

After all, they are the products of a long religious tradition, which they cannot throw off simply by disavowing. The man of faith must recognize that, despite their avowed lack of faith, they may be his allies and fellow combatants in the fight for human freedom, and he will be seriously concerned that he serve the God he knows at least as well as do many of them who serve a God unknown.

RELIGION has frequently been a source of confusion in political life precisely because of its too great readiness to lapse into holier-than-thou attitudes. It is always misleading and dangerous simply to translate the absolutes of religion into the relativities of politics.

Warning is thus needed that an alignment defined by explicit "belief in God"—as to implicit belief, who can judge of another?—cannot be taken as final in the realm of politics. Yet this does not make the attempt to mobilize people of Jewish-Christian faith in defense of democracy either unnecessary or undesirable, since only from the resources of faith, it seems to me, can an adequate "philosophy" of democracy be constructed and the capacity for an unyielding resistance to totalitarianism generated.

True, the secular liberal sometimes displays a loyalty to the transcendent God whom he does not acknowledge that puts the man of faith to shame, but his philosophy seems to lack the inner power to replenish, much less add to, the spiritual capital inherited from his religious tradition or to generate his own kind of loyalty and understanding in others.

A religious mobilization for democracy thus has its justification—*provided* the explicit avowal of religion is not made the principle of separation of the sheep from the goats in the confrontation of democracy with Communism. The sound principle of separation, *on the plane of politics,* can only be allegiance to a democracy that refuses to absolutize itself, as it refuses to absolutize any idea, institution, or "ism"—to a democracy, in short, that explicitly or implicitly recognizes a majesty beyond itself. Within this larger front, the man of Jewish-Christian faith has his own witness to bear, but, to reiterate, he is on dangerous ground when he converts his faith into an ideological touchstone for genuine democratic conviction.

It is not easy to grasp this paradox of the absolute and the relative, of faith and politics, and many religious people tend to be impatient with such subtleties. Yet unless it is grasped, and its implications fully appreciated, the best efforts of the people of religious faith will be confounded and stultified. And sound, effective anti-Communism will be stultified, too. It is perhaps the chief merit of the Washington conference that it measurably enhanced the possibility of a religious mobilization for democracy along lines calculated to strengthen, rather than to confuse, the larger democratic front against Communist totalitarianism. Whether it can go forward to deepen its insights and translate them into practical measures remains to be seen.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

The New Jewish Center

To the Editor of Commentary:

I found the subtitle to Morris Freedman's article, "New Jewish Community in Formation: A Conservative Center *Catering* [!] to Present-Day Needs" (January), rather appropriate. It is sad that a center should rely on catering fees for almost one-third of its budget.

In spite of his doubts, the rabbi offers his flock "familiar, easy to swallow things," hoping for better things in the future. He does not realize that "Gresham's Law" applies in religion as well. Bad religion drives good religion out of circulation. Ritual and appetite leave little room for ethics and self-control.

The religion that came out of the hills of Judea would have us give up civilized society in order to achieve brotherhood. "You shall drink no wine, neither you nor your sons forever; and you shall build no house, nor sow seed, nor plant or own a vineyard, but shall live in tents all your days, so that you may live long in the land where you pass your days" (Jer. 35:6). It is a travesty of terrible proportions if that ancient ethical faith has degenerated into catering to stomachs and egos.

Roger Feinstein

Minneapolis, Minnesota

To the Editor of Commentary:

As an appreciative reader of Commentary for many years, I am puzzled by Morris Freedman's "New Jewish Community in Formation." Was this written with tongue in cheek, or does it contain some deeper, serious level which I failed to discern?

In the prefacing note hope is expressed by the editor that readers "may see concrete manifestations bearing on some widely mooted questions concerning American Jews today." Alas, had there only been a little less concern with the "manifestations" and at least some small concern with the "widely mooted questions."

A multitude of details are meticulously assembled and scrupulously reported but, in the best tradition of cool, deadpan reporting *à la* the *New Yorker,* Mr. Freedman is neither enthused nor offended; he remains supremely unmoved, favorably or unfavorably, by what he sees. A community is carefully described, but any concern with or interest in questions of meaning or significance or quality is excluded.

Commentary's customary tone of moderation and temperance is laudable until such instances when it appears to verge on indifference. Mere reportage, however adroitly presented, is abundantly available elsewhere, but from a journal which names itself Commentary more may reasonably be expected.

Cheapness, vulgarity, organized irreverence (mockingly palmed off as its opposite)—all this is water off Mr. Freedman's back. How any of this, moreover, is supposed to be related to any aspect of Judaism I fail to discern—except as a general description of a style of life, or "Fun Through Judaism."

(Mrs.) Bess Udell

Prairie Village, Kansas

To the Editor of Commentary:

New York City is the last place to look for typical examples of American culture. Here we do it better or worse, but never typically. So to equate Conservative Judaism with the Hillcrest Jewish Center in Queens ("New Jewish Community in Formation") is surely questionable; to suggest that the architecture and decoration of this building represent the general taste is inaccurate.

Our people, whether Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform, do want, as Rabbi Mowshowitz is reported as saying, "the finest we can get." It's true they often don't get it, but when they do they are grateful. And, to me, this wanting is a wonderfully hopeful thing. My own experience has shown that a taste for "pink formica" and "WPA art" does exist but can be changed. This is one of the jobs of the architect and artist.

The large Park Synagogue in Cleveland was designed by the late Erich Mendelsohn and is accepted by architects as a lasting contribution to American building. Here we have a structure by an architect who is famous for the virility, the originality, and the beauty of his visions.

The more moderate-sized Temple Beth El of Springfield, Mass., and the smaller B'nai Israel of Millburn, N. J., both of which I designed, contain works by what are called "artists'

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artists." The sculptures by Ferber and Lassaw, the Ark curtains by Gottlieb and murals by Motherwell in these synagogues have been cited as important modern collaborations between architect and artist. . . .

Anyone familiar with the art world will agree that acceptance of works by these men shows a high level of art appreciation. Yet the congregations involved are typical. What perhaps is atypical is that the architect and artists were willing, on the one hand, to educate the members, and on the other, dedicated, in Kafka's phrase, to "making their work a prayer."

By a quirk of history the best art of today is non-representational; and these men were selected by me, not for their piety in observing the Second Commandment, but for their genius. . . .

PERCIVAL GOODMAN, F.A.I.A.
New York City

Social Mobility: America vs. Europe

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read with great interest the article "Class and Opportunity in Europe and the U.S." by S. M. Lipset and Natalie Rogoff (December). They have performed a real service in making available comparative statistics on occupational mobility, some of which have never been published before while others were little known even to professional students of class structure and social mobility.

However, their interpretations of these interesting statistics are, in part, seriously misleading. This is due to the ambiguous and inconsistent way in which the authors employ the term social mobility. In Table 1 they present statistical comparisons of the occupational "destinations" of men of similar origins in the U.S., France, and Germany. Noting the similarity in the shifts from manual fathers to non-manual sons in all three countries, they *equate* social mobility with occupational mobility and draw the following conclusion: "There can be no doubt that the data from these three studies refute any claim that social mobility in the U.S. is on the whole markedly greater than in Europe, where family status allegedly limits positions open to son."

Yet when they discuss the significant difference in the occupational movement of farmers' sons revealed by the same table—it is much greater in the U.S. than in either France or Germany—our authors insist that this is no evidence of social mobility at all but ought to be explained by changes in the occupational structure of this country: the proportion of the population engaged in agriculture has declined more rapidly in the U.S. than in other countries.

What has happened here is that suddenly, and without saying so, Lipset and Rogoff have changed their definition of social mobility to mean not *all* changes in occupational status from father to son, but only those which occur over and above changes in the occupational structure itself. . . .

Turning next from the examination of the different social "destinations" of men of the same social origins to a consideration of the different social origins of the men who have arrived at the same destination, Lipset and Rogoff report: "We find that there is more movement from the manual worker and farm class into clerical, managerial, and professional jobs in the U.S. than abroad. A larger proportion (52 per cent) of American non-manual workers have manual or farm backgrounds than do their French and German counterparts (35 per cent and 30 per cent respectively). But this is only the other side of the above-mentioned decline of the proportion of Americans engaged in agriculture. The larger movement of Americans into the class of non-manual workers is due, again, not to *a higher rate of social mobility as such,* but to a greater increase in the proportion of non-manual 'opportunities' in the U.S., which have expanded at a faster rate than in Europe."

I submit that this is sheer word play. If 52 out of every 100 American non-manual workers have moved up from manual or farm backgrounds while only 35 of their French and 30 of their German counterparts have done so, this *is* unmistakable evidence of a significantly higher rate of occupational mobility in this country. To be sure, it is quite valuable to know whether occupational movement from farming and manual labor to non-manual jobs depends merely upon the individual's freedom of access to non-manual occupations, or whether it depends also upon the number of non-manual jobs available in the economy as a whole. Lipset and Rogoff deserve credit for having pointed out that the smaller movement into non-manual occupations in Europe is caused not by greater difficulties of access, i.e., greater inherited socio-economic privilege and more snobbery, but primarily by slower economic development.

But this distinction is entirely irrelevant when it comes to the explanation of political behavior. Lipset and Rogoff claim that their findings suggest "a need to modify the long held assumption that a large socialist movement and class-conscious proletariat have not developed in the U.S. because of the high rate of American social mobility as compared with the presumed low European rate." This conclusion

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is entirely unwarranted. The individual with mobility aspirations does not care one iota whether he can move up into a non-manual job because there is no barrier of privilege or because the occupational structure is changing: all that matters to him is that he has 52 chances out of 100 in the U.S., but only 35 in France and merely 30 in Germany.

KURT B. MAYER
Associate Professor of Sociology
Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island

National Committee for an Effective Congress

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Without taking issue with anything else in the article "What Price McCarthy Now?" by James Rorty (January 1955), I should like to correct an impression that may have been created by his reference to "the pressure and propaganda batteries" of the National Committee for an Effective Congress. The National Committee for an Effective Congress is neither a pressure nor a propaganda organization. . . . We raise money for responsible and qualified candidates of both major parties during campaigns; we perform research and other technical services for members of Congress on request; and we supply our own supporters with information as to Congressional developments.

Shortly after Senator Flanders introduced his first resolution for the removal of Senator McCarthy from chairmanship of the Government Operations Committee, he asked for our help. This help, which we gave to the limit of our resources, consisted of research, legal studies and opinion, provision of clerical services, and contact with interested individuals and public organizations. . . .

Earlier in his article, Mr. Rorty said that the National Committee for an Effective Congress is "headed by General Telford Taylor." Mr. Sidney H. Scheuer is acting Chairman of the Committee. Mr. Taylor is an active and invaluable member of our Executive Board. . . .

GEORGE E. AGREE
Executive Secretary
National Committee
for an Effective Congress
New York City

WEVD Maligned?

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a charter reader of COMMENTARY, I have not yet missed a single issue of your fine magazine. . . . And that is why I was particularly shocked by "The World of Station WEVD" by Ruth Glazer (February).

An article on Yiddish radio, where WEVD occupies almost the entire field, has long been overdue—one telling in an objective way about its outstanding achievements as well as its painful shortcomings. But the story by Mrs. Glazer has fallen miserably short of the mark. . . . Anyone taking her report as an evaluation of Jewish radio, and WEVD in particular, will get a very distorted picture.

Mrs. Glazer is guilty mainly of acts of omission. To start with, she disqualifies herself as an unbiased reporter by the fact that she writes only about the programs of one day out of seven. And even in that limited report she shows much bias. Although supposedly reporting on the Friday programs only, she mentions the "New Talent" program not heard on Fridays . . . but knows nothing about such a really fine artistic program as "All Star Theatre of the Air" that *is* heard on Friday. Mrs. Glazer does say something about the Sunday "Forward Hour," which truly deserves all the praise in the world. But then why omit such a fine Sunday program as "Songs of the Synagogue," or the school children quiz? Since Mrs. Glazer admits by implication that she has been tuning in on WEVD also on other days of the week, how could she have missed such outstanding programs as Melvina Rappel's "A Woman's World," or Zvi Scooler's "Our New York," both of which would do honor to any radio station?

I fully agree with Ruth Glazer that WEVD has, and *not probably*, "the most talented and versatile staff of announcers in all radio." And her praise for Zvi Scooler, Nachum Stutchkoff, and, to a lesser degree, for Ben Basenko, is well merited. Why did she omit the names of two other equally fine and outstanding announcers, who *are heard on Friday*, namely David Opatoshu and Michel Goldstein? . . .

Mrs. Glazer also takes a pot-shot at the Yiddish commercials. I hold no brief for them, though they are by and large much better than their counterparts in English . . . but when Mrs. Glazer becomes an authority on Yiddish, she should be asked to halt. She pokes fun at the phrase *"Kvel oon fun Vel"* and remarks about "using a verb normally reserved to described the way a doting grandfather will look at a grandchild." Anyone who knows Yiddish will tell you that a cook will *"kvel"* to see a roast turning out the way she wanted it, or a *baalebosta* will *"kvel"* over her shining floors. Turning ignorance into authoritative fiat is a little too much. . . .

WEVD, its several hundred thousand listeners, *and* COMMENTARY readers deserve to be

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given a much better and fairer report than the one by Ruth Glazer.

NAT DAVIDSON

New York City

The Bolshevik Further Psychoanalyzed

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Bolshevik Man, His Motivations" (February), Daniel Bell's appreciative yet critical study of Nathan Leites's book on the subject, leads me to offer a few observations. . . . Bell states that Leites's conception of Bolshevik character is a static one, unable to throw light on Soviet developments after Lenin's death, and concludes that this is a necessary limitation to psychology as applied to social history. It would seem more correct, however, to hold that this limitation stems . . . from the inadequacies of Leites's Freudian theory. From a broader, anthropologically sounder psychological viewpoint, the *father-son* complex about which the analysis revolves could well serve to illuminate just those aspects of Russian character transformation which, according to Bell, are left unexplained in Leites's work.

Beginning with the past, how did the "father complex" and "death complex" as manifest in 19th-century Russian intellectual character arise? Behind these traits—as clearly shown by Russian cultural history—was a deeply-ingrained psychic relation to God the Father. And wherever this exists, it is always prone to be contaminated by the psychic relation of the son to his actual human father. . . . In the 19th century those individuals whose image of God the Father was markedly contaminated . . . and for whom religion could only be false and distorted, now seized upon secular, rationalistic ideas to support their own inner truth, that God the Father doesn't exist. They then proceeded to live this out in the only way possible . . . by becoming infantile, passive, father-bound sons; *viz* the Karamazovs, Raskolnikovs, Oblomovs, etc. It is at this point in Russian cultural history that Leites's analysis has brilliant relevance.

Lenin, to be sure, was a father-bound defensively ascetic, "homosexual" character who, if he had lived at an earlier time, could well have become a Calvin or Cromwell. He remained in the role of the Son-Redeemer, obedient to the Sacred Doctrine and ready to sacrifice his life for it.

As long as the individual remains a "son," he cannot be fully egocentric, but projects his *total*-itarian claims to power on the Father. Stalin, however, himself took on the role of "God the Father." But this shift was still within the *father-son* complex. . . .

Now for the present and future. Malenkov was linked . . . with the promise of an easier life, i.e., a trend away from the Father to the loving, bounteous Mother. (Malenkov even looks like a "Mama's boy"!) . . . And now it seems that the father image is returning in a new form suggestive of conservatism and tradition: the impressively uniformed and bemedaled generals.

This development is a favorable one. In the first place, it should further rationality because the generals—leaving out Bulganin of course—also symbolize technical competence and administrative achievement. Secondly, conservative, traditional paternal rule allows more room for the expansion of the Mother principle. This development in time would bring greater social stability, production of "maternal" consumer goods, and ease of life—and perhaps even the gradual rehabilitation of the image of God the Father. The danger, of course, lies with the party leaders. They doubtless still have the upper hand and take care to keep the generals within their circumscribed spheres of influence.

HENRY ELKIN

Zurich, Switzerland

The "Puerto Rican Problem"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read with considerable interest Mr. Charles Abrams's "How to Remedy Our 'Puerto Rican Problem'" (February 1955). . . . When Puerto Ricans generally speak the English language and learn the benefits of better living conditions, they will not be exploited and will not create slum conditions. The government of Puerto Rico is making great progress in the teaching of English to children and in New York the Department of Education conducts classes in English for adult Puerto Ricans.

To prevent the shortage of low-rent housing so much needed by Puerto Ricans from becoming progressively more acute, a realistic, intelligent program is needed for keeping in use as many good (relatively) tenements as possible; we should not enact retroactive laws the enforcement of which will make their continuance an economic impossibility.

Mr. Abrams's article is constructive and informed and in general I concur in his findings.

BERNARD J. GILLROY
Commissioner

Department of Housing
and Buildings
New York City

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Voice Beyond Ideology

THE OPPOSING SELF: NINE ESSAYS IN CRITICISM. By LIONEL TRILLING. Viking. 232 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by PAUL PICKREL

THE vigor of Lionel Trilling's criticism arises from the fact that he has been forced to work out an intellectual position that goes against the grain of his own mind. He is the most metropolitan of our critics—only a great city like New York could have produced him—yet the direction of his thought becomes increasingly anti-metropolitan. He has brilliant powers of analysis, yet more and more the object of his analysis is the vindication of the image-making faculty of the human mind against the analytical faculty. He is a true son of the age of ideology, feeling fully the appeal of the intellectual aggression we call ideology, the determination to make reality conform to the mind's reading of reality; yet the essence of what he has to say is that the universe speaks in a voice beyond ideology, and that man can realize the fullness of his being only by listening to that voice.

Trilling's criticism appeals to his contemporaries (his earlier book of essays, *The Liberal Imagination,* is said to have sold 70,000 copies in the inexpensive reprint) because he faces, with learning and intelligence, the problem every intellectual is up against in one form or another. Since, for the last century and a half, ideology has been the chief content of intellectual life, the failure of ideology leaves the contemporary intellectual sunk in guilt. Ideology, he feels, ought to have worked; perhaps it would have worked if only he had tried the right brand, or had read the directions more carefully before application. And if our problems fail of solution before the mind's aggression, he asks, is not the commitment that forms the very basis of the intellectual life, the commitment to mind, rendered suspect or void? Personal pride is involved: if the intellectual ends up voting for the same political party his old aunts vote for, and for very much the same reasons, what availed the whole intellectual ordeal? National safety is involved: how can a nation survive which has to put its program in a handful of embarrassingly flimsy slogans when it is faced by an empire crashing through history in the heavy armor of ideology? Finally, to listen to the voice beyond ideology—isn't that anti-intellectualism, the intellectual's sin against the Holy Ghost?

Trilling can speak to the ideologist *manqué* in the contemporary intellectual because there is so much of the ideologist *manqué* in himself. He carries weight because in abandoning ideology he has not abandoned his commitment to intellect. And if at times all his travail ends in something like platitude, the very reluctance with which he reaches that result gives it a moral tension and an intellectual excitement that revitalize it.

THE hero of *The Opposing Self,* the subject of its first and longest essay, is John Keats. In him Trilling finds the last triumphant expression of his own image of how the life of the mind ought to be lived. For John Keats lived with ideas lovingly without in any way becoming their victim; he was able to realize himself as an intellectual being without becoming encased in ideology. Keats gave his admiration to the man capable "of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason"; at the same time he said of himself, "I find that I can find no enjoyment in the world but a continual drinking of knowledge." "He boldly put pleasure, even contentment, at the center of his theory of poetry"; yet "the only salvation that Keats found it possible to conceive" was "the tragic salvation, the soul accepting the fate that defines it." He trusted the imagination, the sense of the wholeness of life, because he was himself whole.

Of the many endowments that went into

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such a life Trilling singles out one for special scrutiny: Keats's profound sense of "condition." This will hardly come as a surprise to readers of Trilling's earlier work, since the concept of condition is the rock on which his thought is built. Even the plot of his novel, *The Middle of the Journey*, is a brilliantly elaborated pun on the word condition. But in *The Opposing Self* the concept has deepened and broadened beyond its earlier use. By condition Trilling means everything that makes it impossible for us to think whatever we please about ourselves and the world we live in. He means all the ways the universe modifies and qualifies and limits our spirits, all the recalcitrance and perverseness and abrasiveness the universe exhibits when we try to deal with it as ideologists. It is the law that springs into being whenever spirit touches matter. It is the voice beyond ideology.

The sternness of this concept is not new in Trilling's work; it was already apparent in the discussion of *Billy Budd* in *The Middle of the Journey*. Nor is the idea that condition is the source of value new, though perhaps it has not before been put so strongly as in *The Opposing Self*, when Trilling says of Jane Austen that she recognized the fact "that spirit is not free, that it is conditioned, that it is limited by circumstances," and it is only on this account that spirit has "virtue and meaning." But Trilling's favorite quotation from E. M. Forster has long been "Death destroys a man but the idea of death saves him"—that is, the inevitability of death is the condition under which we lead our lives and the source of the value we attach to life.

What is new in the concept of condition in *The Opposing Self* is the notion that condition is not only the iron law of the universe and the source of value, but that it is also a kind of benediction, a blessing, a principle of reconciliation, a source of joy and pleasure. No other of Trilling's books has been concerned with joy and pleasure to anything like the extent *The Opposing Self* is; no other speaks in such a spirit of reconciliation, of "calm submission to the law of things." The reason is that condition has now become something like a religious principle in Trilling's thought: the way God manifests Himself in His creation. It comes close to fitting Trilling's own description of the Torah of the Rabbis and Wordsworth's Nature: something "which is from God and might be said to represent Him as a sort of surrogate, a divine object to which one can be in an intimate, passionate relationship . . . which one can, as it were, handle, and in a sense create, drawing from it inexhaustible meaning by desire, intuition, and attention."

Now it must be confessed that a good deal of *The Opposing Self* leaves the impression that it deals with what Trilling thinks he ought to feel rather than with what he feels. The discussion of pleasure, for instance, may convince both writer and reader that they ought to feel more pleasure in their lives than they do but it will hardly increase the amount of pleasure either feels. The concept of condition often remains just a concept, with a speculative, postulated quality about it; it is necessary to Trilling's position and so it must be there, but it has little reality except as an intellectual construct. It is like the rural setting of *The Middle of the Journey*—as landscape it is a stage set, as action it is melodrama: the book remains a story of New Yorkers on vacation, and the best part of it is the conflict of ideas they bring with them out of the ideological metropolis they have left.

But if Trilling is the intellectual equivalent of the New Yorker who is convinced that the country is the true seat of all virtue yet would not think of living anywhere but in New York, that is one of the chief reasons for the respect with which we read him: he acknowledges the paradox which is ourselves. If he arrives at his position against the grain, if it requires powers with which he is only moderately endowed and makes less call on powers he has in abundance, that constitutes a part of his claim to intellectual leadership in this post-ideological age.

With the exception of George Orwell, the writers discussed in *The Opposing Self* all belong more or less to the 19th century, and with the exception of Howells they are more or less the writers to be expected. The acknowledgments make clear that most of the essays were written to meet requests for commemorative addresses, introductions to editions of texts, and the like. As a result, the essays are not always suited to the purposes of the book. It is unfortunate, for instance, that the essay on Tolstoy concerns *Anna Karenina*—a choice that makes Tolstoy appear irrelevant to the argument, whereas in fact there was probably no other 19th-century writer whose career as a whole so dramatized the problem under discussion. It is easy to think of writers not touched on who would have been fascinating subjects for essays in this context—D. H. Lawrence and G. B.

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Shaw, to name two. And a critic has a responsibility to living writers.

More important than what subjects have been left out or put in the book is the suspicion that, however innocently, Trilling somewhat misrepresents his own work in his preface, his title, and some of the essays. He calls his subject the opposition of the self to culture, and it may be idle to dispute his choice of words, especially since the word culture means in his usage just about anything or everything, as it does among many contemporary intellectuals. But the whole drift of Trilling's book makes clear that what he is really talking about is the resistance being puts up to ideology. Self and being may be for his purposes interchangeable, but ideology and culture are not; they differ as a blueprint differs from a building. The grand discovery which is the central fact the book deals with is the discovery that a blueprint (say—to borrow Trilling's own figure —a blueprint for a society without Bastilles) can be more imprisoning, can crucify being more, than a building (even a Bastille) because a building is conditioned and a blueprint is not.

The Opposing Self is an impressive example of why literary criticism is at present a central mode of intellectual discourse. Actually Trilling is as concerned for society, as concerned for the life of the mind in general, as he is for literature; and the Arnoldian breadth of his concern is a source of strength to his criticism. But he makes works of the imagination the vehicle of his thought because such works are the images of wholeness most available to us. Of all the mind's artifacts they are least violable by ideology; being of condition all compact, they have to speak with the voice beyond ideology.

Getting Rich on Notions

100 STORIES OF BUSINESS SUCCESS: CASE HISTORIES OF AMERICAN ENTERPRISE. By the Editors of Fortune. Simon and Schuster. 174 pp. $2.95.

Reviewed by MORRIS FREEDMAN

THIS little volume presents a selection of "success stories" from *Fortune* magazine. The subtitle may be somewhat misleading, for the "case histories" are limited to "small" businesses, those run by individual entrepreneurs whose profit is rarely more than $100,000 a year, the kind of men with whom most of us may not too unreasonably hope to identify ourselves. When they originally appeared in the magazine, these little islands of neatly framed print devoted to individual small winners were placed in the midst of surging analyses of whole industries or all-encompassing trends, and thus given something like their proper proportions. And yet, when one reads these vignettes all together and, so to speak, on their own, they are seen to represent something new and by no means insignificant in the American pattern of business success.

The stories are seductive—and perhaps deceptive—being structured on the overnight quality success assumes in narration or reminiscence. Years of preparation and failure are neglected or telescoped into a moment. "He went to work as a salesman in 1938 but made only a bare living until 1949," reads one sentence. Then in the next sentence, the morning after the dream: "But last year [1952], at thirty-two, Kaufman's manufacturers' sales agents had gross billings of $4 million and Kaufman's tax return for the year was in a class with that of many a Pittsburgh captain of industry." The writing slights the inescapable, grubby details of humdrum organization, of daily application, of repeated failure, and concentrates on the delicious statistics of financial gossip, giving earnings in the most impressive light—including taxes to raise total figures, excluding them with emphasis when the remainder is striking by itself.

Throughout, the theme insists that this could be you, or rather, that it takes only you to bestow fortune on yourself. Responsibility is emphatically private and asserted in the face of immense odds; some "break" is needed, but people make their own "breaks," apparently. The stories go out of their way to relate themselves to the ordinary and to adversity. ". . . one of a large and not at all rich Pittsburgh family . . . when the bottom dropped out of the cotton market. . . . Tom Carvel, now forty-five, was a discontented door-to-door salesman of radios in New York City in 1934. Sales came hard. . . ." Salvation comes through the direct efforts of the victim himself. But the sacrifices demanded are heavy indeed. "By day he worked on the railroad, by night on the press."

ALL this, however, belongs to the "typical" American success story as we have always known it. What is new is the paths these self-

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driven men now take. Unlike their great predecessors, who are conceived as pursuing one "dream" until it came true, these newer enterprisers keep shifting their field. A druggist becomes a liquor dealer when liquor proves his best item. A tool-maker turns to constructing aluminum furniture when he comes on a bargain of 10,000 pounds of scrap aluminum tubing. What is pursued is not success through devotion to some particular need or product, but success in general. What makes for success is means, not end; the Big Idea, the *gimmick,* is Success alone.

So in these hundred "cases" we see that the path to success is always a by-path. Not one made his fortune in any common, familiar way. One man invented a toy called "Slinky," which can "coil and uncoil down a flight of steps"; another inventor produced a "sno-car," a vehicle for travelling over snow. One man sells burlesques of business clichés: "I can keep confidential what you tell me but the people I tell it to can't." One man has a machine that will give you a massage right in your own home; another digs cheap swimming pools; another manufactures shoes with built-in foam rubber; another, giant parade balloons; another, a tiltable floor which converts a school gymnasium into an auditorium.

Nowhere in the book is there an inventor or salesman or idea man on the order of Bell, Marconi, Ford, Rockefeller, Sears and Roebuck, or, say, Ivy Lee. No one in this book has inaugurated a business that promises to become an "industry." These new American pioneers are cultivating little spots overlooked during the first great settlement of the industrial and business empire, or else they simply latch onto the big fish—by producing automobile and telephone accessories, for example. But we have only to look at the regularly repeated little advertisements in the Sunday papers and in the ladies' magazines—do-it-yourself kits, dowsers that locate wall beams, devilled-egg dishes, gigantic gold-plated paper clips—to recognize how well and respectably established this marginal territory has become in the course of satisfying the most specialized demands, from the sensible to the frivolous.

In a way this display of free-floating American know-how is testimony to an even greater achievement than our proved ability to turn out automobiles or create sales campaigns. We create business itself. Our real genius is combining whimsy with practicality, hitching dreams, *any* dreams, to rocket ships of efficient fulfillment. Often, the businessman can find his opportunity even by creating a kind of "anti-business" to oppose the frills and annoyances of American industry: for instance, you can buy a gadget to cut out television commercials, and a consumer's magazine once passed the word along that there are certain establishments which for a reasonable fee will take off all the chrome trim on the outside of your new car and cover up the holes. Nor are the products of enterprise only materialistic: there is a man in this book who intends to make a million through selling Bibles on the installment plan, and we have only to think of the highbrow paper-book publishers, or the industries of high-fidelity phonograph equipment and art reproduction, to see that the spiritual and the intellectual have not been overlooked. America, one is tempted to say, can satisfy any need, indeed create needs to oppose needs. If the spectacle of these stalls and pushcarts of our economic life is often ridiculous, it presents a certain marvelous richness: what a country it is, where one can become a success by producing a doll that wets its diaper, or an indelible lipstick. *Excelsior!*

Jews in Cardiff

Ash on a Young Man's Sleeve. By Dannie Abse. Criterion. 200 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by Pearl Kazin

For all its toughening know-how, and the deracinating power that New York's brash and sophisticated force is supposed to exert on the children of the city's immigrants, sucking them out and away from the language-barriered narrowness of kinship they feel about the heights of the Bronx or the depths of Brooklyn, it has always seemed a little preposterous to us to think that Jews very much like us, speaking roughly the same kind of Yiddish, punctuating their remarks with much the same kind of gestures and intonation, could be living in parts of the world whose Population and Chief Products made up the grinding routine of geography lessons in P.S. 125. Maybe Chicago and Boston can be let in with the rest of us, and Los Angeles, and even [laughter] Rosenberg, Texas, *even* the East End of London

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The OPPOSING SELF
Nine Essays in Criticism

THE VIKING PRESS, 18 E. 48th St., N. Y. 17

(because Tante Nachamke had lived there for a while before she finally embarked for America, and that hard-headed dowager was no spinner of fairy tales). We'd allow these places the possibility of having Jews "like us," allow it with a certain incredulous smirk, knowingly suspicious as we were of their authenticity, tending to say, as someone I know once remarked about a friend of ours who grew up in (of all places) Portsmouth, New Hampshire, "Well, he's really sort of a *goyishe* Jew."

But Brazil, Italy, Honolulu? Ridiculous. Or Cardiff, whose Jewish life is undeniably there in Mr. Abse's novel? Impossible. Then we began pushing out of the subway circuit, moved by curiosity and ambition, by education and snobbery, granted our own kind of wandering freedom by jobs and Fulbrights and Guggenheims, and we began to back up along the routes our parents had traveled, though never getting quite to the point from which they had started or making the move in quite their way. But we began to know that certain *latkes* and certain *chochmes* were, astoundingly, made from the same recipe, by the same kind of people, anywhere a Guggenheim can take you. Yet for me it never quite registered that in the British Isles, those very British Isles that were the college-English-course territory of Shakespeare and Dickens and kings and queens, of Morgan le Fay and King Arthur and Cyril Connolly, that on those holy swards of *their* culture—there could be places and people, as redolent of the real thing as the front-page format of the *Forward,* which were forever Yiddish: or as forever Yiddish as our parts of New York itself will remain.

Reading Mr. Abse's slight, at times touching, but annoyingly disjointed and slapdash autobiographical novel about his boyhood in Cardiff, it occurred to me that although place names like Ogmore, Porthcawl, Penarth, and Swansea are no more "Jewish," God knows, than the street names in my part of Brooklyn (resounding bits of British biscuit like Hopkinson, Chester, Bristol, and Amboy), such are the willful deceptions of familiarity that they seem much more so, to me, than Porthcawl and Penarth. (Some British writers, of course, like David Daiches, wise to the parochial funnybones of New York Jews, have dug rich comic gold from the solecisms of Scots Yiddish, though it seems doubtful that an Edinburgh Jew would get quite the same kick out of a piece about

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Reflections

"A mind which is free from the prejudices that attend passion, judges more uprightly than a mind which by such passions, or any other corporeal Impressions is solicited or disturbed. For even as a cloudy Sky, and turbulent Sea will neither transmit or reflect any Light; so a disturbed mind admits no Reason, tho it come never so plain and clear.

"Boethius sets this forth in very elegant Verse, which thus begins,

"The Stars, tho of themselves so bright,
When hid in Clouds can give no light.

"We must pursue the greatest and most perfect Good with the greatest zeal, and lesser Goods with a zeal proportionably less. Nor must we subordinate greater Goods to less, but less to greater.

"The Good, which in any case in question, you would have another man do unto you; the same you are bound in the like case, to do unto him; So far forth as it may be done without prejudice to a Third.

"The Evil you would not have done to your self, you must abstain from doing the same to another, as far as may be done without prejudice to a Third."

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the similar misalliance of languages in New York.)

SOMEWHAT reluctantly, disbelievingly, then, we came to acknowledge the strange truth that Brownsville and Delancey Street and Mosholu Parkway were not the only safe-deposit vaults of authentic East European Yiddish life; that even though this is a Welshman writing, who tells us "My mother was born at Ystalyfera one rainy Tuesday, my father on Guy Fawkes night in Bridgend," he is not for a minute writing about those alien, "assimilated," *goyishe* Jews. Though in Mr. Abse's world there are the beating of the Channel tides, and the appearance of old men with names like Dafydd Morgan and girl friends with names like Megan Davies, and the young Dan's dreams of glory about cricket matches, still "It was Friday night and we were Jewish. The two candles burning symbolized for me holiness and family unity. My mother could speak Welsh and Yiddish and English, and Dad knew swear words as well. One of my big brothers would say the prayer and we would eat. . . . The meat was kosher."

And we are given, almost as though Mr. Abse were trying to prove to us that this is much the same world as our own, the familiar, snuffling good-for-nothing, Uncle Isidore, not exactly an uncle, living on family handouts, "an oldish, untidy man, a sort of amateur beggar, who wouldn't work but read in the Reference Library and forever played his violin." (And played it badly, too, as that kind of uncle always does.) Nor are the other landmarks missing: the boy's fiercely dedicated Communist brother, Leo; the mother with an endless reserve of tears to shed no matter what the mood of the occasion; the father whose greatest ambition is to make his sons doctors and lawyers, educating them to the point where they can no longer talk to him, so that he can *really* say life is tragic; and old Rabbi Aaronowich, who said *kaddish* for his son when he married a *shikse,* who "spoke in English, with a Russian and Welsh accent, throwing in a bit of Yiddish when his vocabulary failed him."

But for all the warm familiarity, there is something missing here. The setting is strange and fascinating to us, but though Mr. Abse's novel is interesting, in its savory authenticity, as incontrovertible proof against our own provincial incredulity (and against the tendency to make all this a big joke, which Daiches has capitalized on), he has not come to terms with his own history enough to show the full commitment and conviction necessary to a novelist. Choosing too flimsy and easy a form for his book, which renders its experience as tenuous and impermanent as a house of limp cards, he does not make the life he is evoking sink as deep into the imagination as one wishes he might have done. *Ash on a Young Man's Sleeve* (and why the pompous title from Eliot when the matter is what it is?) is too literally sketchy, shifting with eye-straining abruptness from a quick vignette of family life here, to a hastily constructed sliver of history there, to rapid-fire boys' talk about sex, to snatches of popular songs from the year he is writing about at the moment. It all seems a curiously old-fashioned, and by now not very effective, derivation from Dos Passos and similar writers of the 30's, who tried to suggest the jerky, capricious shifts of history through a kaleidoscopic shuffling of episodes in their novels.

SOMETHING of the same narrow timidity seems to be at work in Mr. Abse's sensibility that stifles so many American immigrant-begotten novelists, who find it so hard to blend and merge and use, in their own visions and with their own voices, the world of their fathers and the alien, yet demanding, world to which their fathers came. So we get very little valid sense of change or development in Mr. Abse's characters, only a battery of hastily chosen details, indiscriminately conceived images, left to drift without a guiding point of view: and this can lead to some very bad writing. Though Mr. Abse tries, rather over-insistently, to show how much, how terribly and crucially much, is going on in the world as Dan is growing up in Cardiff in the 30's, the mark he is saying it left on the boy is never felt creatively enough to leave a lasting mark on us. How is the subtle, shaping interaction of history and character to be seen if he contents himself with using "current events" like a hypodermic injection, plunged rather desperately into the arm of his prose whenever the life of the story seems to be beating too feebly? It just won't do to attempt to underline the boy's awareness of Nazism by suddenly devoting five pages to a television-like account of Grynszpan and the assassination of von Rath. And he is all too inclined to add the right "ponderous" and timely dimension by awkward interpolations: "The voice said Newport, Swindon, Reading. . . . It

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seemed the voice of Fate. More appropriately it should have called out Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Spain."

When he leaves history lessons alone, the book makes far better reading. In accounts of the countryside around Cardiff, and the boy's adventurous, poking, awkward curiosity about girls, in lyric passages about the sea, and winter swirling through the city, and summer insects rasping away in the grass, Mr. Abse often writes with charm and a lively boldness of imagery. But at times, and here the lack of his own true voice is most seriously felt, the highly charged metaphoric excitement is entirely too reminiscent of the soaring, blazing imagery Dylan Thomas volcanoed through his own prose about his childhood. This kind of hurtling daredevilishness often only reminds us that Thomas's wild and roaring brilliance is a treacherous kind of fire for other writers to try and catch on their own.

True as it is that ornateness is peculiarly characteristic of the Welsh when they write in English, even when they speak in English, it is hard to avoid feeling that Thomas has been taken too literally as the Icarus model for some of Mr. Abse's more exuberant and unsuccessful flights. Perhaps this is the very temptation into which the younger Welsh writers have unavoidably been led, at first by the fantastic explosiveness of Thomas's fame, and now in overpious homage to the dead. In either case, originality loses out, and Mr. Abse should stick more closely to the particular originality of *his* Welsh, and Jewish, experience, and the particular understanding and language that can grow out of it.

Yet the evidences of a potentially rewarding individuality are there, in many parts of this first novel, despite its abundance of shortcomings, its imitative timidity. Where Mr. Abse is at his best is where he comes most intensely in touch with his own world, the Jewish life of Cardiff that is distinctly his, and felt, and now, through his efforts, neither outlandish nor merely comic for us.

The Nazi Era

TYCOONS AND TYRANT: GERMAN INDUSTRY FROM HITLER TO ADENAUER. By LOUIS P. LOCHNER. Regnery. 304 pp. $5.00.

THE WILHELMSTRASSE: A STUDY OF GERMAN DIPLOMATS UNDER THE NAZI REGIME. By PAUL SEABURY. University of California Press. 217 pp. $3.00.

THE BORMANN LETTERS. Edited with an introduction and notes by H. R. TREVOR-ROPER. British Book Centre. 200 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by MANFRED WOLFSON

WHILE all three of these books deal with the Nazi era, stressing its early, middle, and final phases respectively, they differ widely in their particular subject matter, in the scope and level of their treatment, and in their regard for historical sources.

Louis Lochner hopes to refute "certain assumptions concerning German industry . . . firmly fixed in the minds of millions. They may be summed up as follows: German industry placed Hitler in the saddle; German industry supported Hitler because he promised to abolish trade unions; German industry wanted war

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and conspired with Hitler to provoke it; German industry offered no resistance to Nazism."

Hitler came to power only through the convergence of numerous factors operating within a tense pre-totalitarian setting. Any serious examination of the sweeping assumptions about German politics held abroad during the 30's and 40's must be welcomed, not only because these may require important revisions, but because such examination may instruct us as to the reliability of our methods of political observation vis-à-vis a foreign, and especially a totalitarian, regime. Nothing could be more urgent at the present time.

One doubts very much whether Mr. Lochner has adequately described the political intricacies of the pre-1933 period in Germany when he writes that "the cry for a change in Germany was not very different from the cry for a change in the United States which in 1932 brought to the fore a Franklin D. Roosevelt and in 1952 a Dwight D. Eisenhower." Certainly mass support was involved in all three cases, and a new leadership, but Mr. Lochner not only fails to see the differences but contradicts himself—to say the least—when he writes that the majority of dependable democrats in Germany, including the intellectuals in the trade unions and the Social Democratic party, failed to take Hitler seriously, seeing in him "more or less a Charlie Chaplin-like comic figure." This is not supported by evidence.

That he writes at times with unrestrained rancor about the Nuremberg prosecution is possibly a clue to, but no justification for, Mr. Lochner's disregard of many primary sources whose authenticity has been tested in court, and which form an invaluable part of the Nuremberg documentation. Instead, he has largely relied on interviews with "captains of industry in the age groups around and beyond seventy who had been in commanding positions before and during the Hitler regime." But since attitudes change, subsequent statements may introduce historical inaccuracies, not to mention deliberate distortions in cases where the interviewees were charged with complicity in the events in question. Such inaccuracies must be allowed for in cases like that of Hugo Eckener or Paul Reusch (both born in 1868), and in assessing the information given by Keppler, Flick, Ter Mer, *et al.* who were convicted at Nuremberg. Other "tycoons," about whom Lochner writes more fully, like Bosch and Siemens, died in 1940 and 1941 respectively; he altogether omits to tell us whether under the younger industrialists, during the later war years, the earlier policy of these corporations became more positively and actively a Nazified one.

A lone example may illustrate the kind of inaccuracy that tends to invalidate evidence based on anecdote and hearsay. In his chapter on the actual evidence of German industry's resistance to Nazism, Mr. Lochner writes that Dr. Ferdinand Porsche, designer and manufacturer of

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the Volkswagen, "did not care to be identified with the Himmler organization," yet "was given an honorary rank of *Oberführer* in the SS on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday in 1943." The author, who claims to have examined "all the pertinent documents in this case," might have noticed that Porsche was in fact *promoted* to SS *Oberführer* (senior colonel) on January 30, 1942, and not in 1943. Moreover, since Porsche was born September 3, 1875, in 1943 he would have reached his sixty-eighth, not his sixty-fifth, birthday. From published documents, Mr. Lochner might also have learned that neither Porsche nor anyone else was ever made an "honorary leader" (let alone against his wishes!) after 1936, for an SS decree dated January 23, 1936, abolished the title of SS *Ehrenführer* (honorary leader); after that date all SS leaders were either assigned, or attached, to an SS staff or agency.

The "Circle of the Friends of Himmler," composed of various industrialists including representatives of the three leading German banks, met regularly in order to get acquainted with the senior SS leaders. The latter lectured to them not only about abstract SS aims and Himmler's pet archaeological projects—as Mr. Lochner writes—but gave them specific reports on the activities of the infamous SD *Einsatzgruppen* or slaughter squads, of SS "resettlement" measures, etc., etc., and invited them to visit Himmler's field headquarters and concentration camps.

Mr. Lochner's suggestion that "Himmler's Friends" was organized primarily to obtain reserved seats for industrialists at Nazi party rallies verges on the preposterous. He overlooks the evidence showing that "Himmler's Friends" gave the SS a million marks annually in the form of a blank check "for special tasks" whose very nature required the item to be concealed in Himmler's own regular budget. It should be added that, if the tycoons before 1933 subsidized the Nazis less than they did some other parties—as Lochner generalizes from Flick's tabulations—they nonetheless had steadily financed rightist parties and para-military organizations ever since the early days of the Weimar Republic. Mr. Lochner describes the three million marks ($720,000) raised by the industrialists for the March 1933 elections as a trick, yet the money, and the votes they bought, went straight to the Nazi-Conservative "alliance," and helped consolidate the dictatorship.

All this does not mean that the industrialists, especially their older generation, did not dislike many of the Nazi bosses and did not hope eventually to put them "in their place." But that hope soon dimmed; meanwhile the "voluntary contributions" to the Nazi party ("Adolf Hitler Spende") from industry, trade, insurance, banking, and so forth, amounting to 60 million marks annually in the end, were regarded by the party as a pledge.

Some of Mr. Lochner's stories of the industrialists' resistance to the Hitler regime, especially in wartime, even though that resistance was only symbolic or passive, are encouraging to anyone looking for evidence that totalitarianism is not always as "total" as it may appear to be. Mr. Lochner warns us, correctly, against Thyssen's book, *I Paid Hitler,* as a source. He is also somewhat justified in his hopes for the future. The postwar redistribution of German industrial power, which permits labor to collaborate in the determination of general policy, reduces the chances industrialists have to subsidize right-wing parties.

But it is difficult to escape the conclusion that, on balance, Mr. Lochner has failed to evaluate critically the Nazi period or the data bearing on it. His neglect to specify exact sources and to assess the credibility of his various informants is not reassuring. He writes that the story of the "ungodly things"—an oblique reference to the Third Reich's slave-labor and spoliation program—"has been told and retold in the trials and by the press, hence needs no elaboration by me." That hardly follows. If, instead of dodging the issue raised by German industry's involvement with the Nazis in the murder, enslavement, and looting of millions of Europeans, he had brought to bear the relevant Nuremberg material and tried to present a more balanced appraisal, Mr. Lochner might have succeeded better in his attempt "to clear away the rubble of legend and misrepresentation which obstructs one of the paths which lead to the truth about the past."

PAUL SEABURY, in his perceptive and well-written *Wilhelmstrasse,* makes use of the German Foreign Office as a case study to throw light on the question of how far the Nazis succeeded in reshaping to their own ends the civil-service bureaucracy they inherited from the pre-totalitarian state. Then taking the professionals who functioned within this bureaucracy as a further case study, he poses the greater problem of in-

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dividual moral responsibility under a society in process of totalitarianization.

The Weimar Republic's efforts to "democratize" the Foreign Office largely failed. Most German career diplomats disliked democratic "amateurs"—even when they did not oppose the republic itself. After Hitler's advent some members of the Foreign Office were dismissed or retired, but the majority of the diplomats stayed, which for a while prevented any hard-core Nazi from getting a major position in the foreign service. The government shakeup of February 1938, in which Hitler assumed direct control over the Wehrmacht, was a turning point in foreign affairs, too, for at the same time Baron von Neurath, Hindenburg's protegé, despite his readiness to yield to Nazi pressure, was succeeded by the Nazi Joachim Ribbentrop as head of the German Foreign Office.

The greater part of Mr. Seabury's book deals with the deterioration of that Office's role in the formulation of foreign policy under Ribbentrop, and with the weakening of its traditions and methods under the encroachment of the SS and the latter's own "ideological bureaucracy." Thus, in the end, the Foreign Office even came to take a hand in the deportation and massacre of Jews.

It is true that some of the leading German diplomats remained in office under the Third Reich because Brüning urged them to try to "frustrate any aggressive foreign or military policies of Hitler," just as some industrialists accepted posts in the Nazi administration of the economy "in order to prevent worse things." But Mr. Seabury seems to have a better memory than Lochner, and does not forget that men like Neurath, Bülow, and Weizsaecker approved of Hitler's withdrawal from the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference, and of his unilateral denunciation of the arms-limitation clauses of the Versailles Treaty. They disagreed but slightly with the hard-core Nazis in the matter of the truncation and occupation of Czechoslovakia, and the "settlement" of the Polish Corridor question. Mr. Seabury is not blind to the difficulties faced by those who hoped to frustrate the immoral designs of totalitarianism from within, and how these difficulties make non-totalitarian moral yardsticks difficult to apply. Yet the question of moral choice and action that confronts any man with political responsibility cannot be dodged even where powers of initiative are limited.

Mr. Seabury's book is enriched by insights based upon research in the Nuremberg trial transcript and in the documentation prepared by both the prosecution and the defense. Scrupulousness endows his work with balance as well as authenticity; it is a model historical study.

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THE genuineness of *The Bormann Letters* has not been questioned, and it affords a primary source of evidence on the people closest to Hitler, and on the kind of life they led, from Stalingrad to the fall of Berlin. But the letters themselves are often boring, even when they tell of Gerda Bormann's attitude toward her husband's mistress. Their chief value is in the light they throw on personal relations near the apex of the Nazi power structure.

H. R. Trevor-Roper's introduction summarizes certain conclusions that offer themselves in these letters about Albert Speer and his protegés, but one of his major conclusions should, in my opinion, be questioned. He writes that, upon Himmler's appointment as Minister of the Interior in 1943, Bormann, his rival, "acted promptly and after a few encounters 'Uncle Heinrich' retired defeated." The story of Bormann's undisputed supremacy in Hitler's court, based especially on Speer's account, was given currency in Trevor-Roper's earlier writings. Bormann's ascendancy as party bureaucrat over Himmler the police boss was won only in the *very* "last days of Hitler." Until then Himmler, as Reichsführer SS, did not *need* to belong to the "Führer's" immediate entourage; his relation to power was unlike Bormann's or Goebbels'. The common assumption that the party was stronger than the police—further encouraged by the Malenkov-Beria parallel—is false, not only because (as has recently become more obvious) the importance of different parts of the totalitarian "machine" is not necessarily commensurate with the career status of the nominal heads of those parts, but also because the functions of the SS extended far beyond the sphere of secret-police activity.

The Bormann letters show that animosity like that between Bormann and Speer did not exist between the former and Himmler. Their relations were actually cordial. "Uncle Heinrich" not only confided in Bormann, but Gerda writes in September 1944 that she cannot "bear imagining what would happen if you and Heinrich didn't see to everything." At that time, as Bormann's own circular dated the evening of July 20, 1944 shows, Himmler's SS and police officials enjoyed greater power than the Nazi party Gauleiters. On October 10, 1944 Hitler ordered Bormann "to discuss all sorts of matters with H. Himmler." Finally Bormann's reference to "the magnificent energy" with which Himmler tackled his tasks as commander-in-chief of the Replacement Army appears, from these letters, to have been sincere, and thus inconsistent with Trevor-Roper's suggestion that Bormann was scheming to put Himmler at a distance from the center of power.

It is the merit of publications like *The Bormann Letters* that they offer primary source material against which to check the secondary sources on the final phases of Hitler's regime. Bormann's example should give caution to those who jump too quickly to conclusions about the inner workings of totalitarian regimes in general.

The Great Exodus as Thriller

THE SECRET ROADS. By JON AND DAVID KIMCHE. Secker and Warburg (London). 220 pp. 15 shillings.

Reviewed by GEORGE LICHTHEIM

THE SECRET ROADS opens with a quotation from a modern English playwright and closes with some rather ponderous reflections on the destiny of Israel. In between the authors have tried to tell the story of "Aliyah Beth," or illegal immigration into Palestine, from 1938 to 1948. Regrettably, they have adopted the style of the contemporary magazine thriller. From the moment, quite early in the first chapter, when "a tallish young man in his late twenties strode with firm step and confident air across the Berlin Street (*sic*) into the dreaded headquarters building of the Gestapo," the tale unfolds with all the relentless mechanical suspense of a pulp serial. "Little did the blackshirted Storm-Trooper who politely conducted the young man to the 'Supervisor' guess that his charge had come from a Jewish communal settlement in Palestine to make a deal with the Gestapo." Little do the authors guess that their literary manner is inappropriate to their subject matter. It is to be hoped that one day the story of "Aliyah Beth" will be told in a different form.

There are other things wrong with this book. It contains, for example, too many inaccuracies. The address of the Berlin Zionist office is given as "Mainecke Strasse"—a plausible but erroneous transliteration from some other language; the Blackshirt we have just met cannot have been a Storm Trooper—they wore brown shirts; the Yugoslav political police is the UDBA, not the "Utbah"; there were less than half a million Jews in pre-war Hun-

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This *I Believe*

by Harrison E. Salisbury*

. . . "THE Great Dictator cannot shuffle and experiment. . . . His choice of generals is limited. Even his choice of tactics and strategy may be restricted. For he cannot lose. . . . The famous Stalingrad encirclement was achieved by the Russians largely because Hitler's commanders had no freedom to obey the ordinary laws of military necessity. . . .

"Thus, the supposed 'freedom of action' of the dictator, his ease in meeting problems, the absence of controls over his acts become in reality a strait-jacket which is often more constricting than the checks and balances of democracy. The dictator must walk a narrow path leading only upward. He is limited by the dialectic of communism or Nationalist Socialism in his choice of techniques and only too often is even more sharply restricted by the urgencies of his presumed infallibility. He must reveal no mortal flaw in his divine apparatus. Thus, considerations of prestige often do not permit him to utilize the men whose brains and ability he and his country badly need. And there is no parliament to compel him. . . .

"Every dictatorship by its very nature must be a police state. Only police can provide the terror which is necessary to make people work and accept such conditions. But once the population is intimidated the police themselves become a problem, for in the absence of threats to the state threats must be created. It is only in an atmosphere of threat and terror that the wheels of the mechanism can be made to turn over. Ordinary motivations are destroyed or paralyzed by the terror.

"The closer you look at dictatorship the more you are surprised, not at its surface 'efficiency' but that the system can be made to run at all. The sheer effort which a man like Stalin had to mobilize just to make his clumsy dictatorship work would have produced miracles if applied to our supposedly cumbersome democratic apparatus."

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*THE FATAL FLAWS OF DICTATORSHIPS
by Harrison E. Salisbury
The New York Times Magazine—Feb. 20, 1955.

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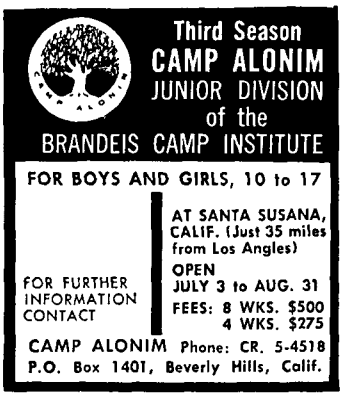
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gary, not one million; the number of Jews who came under Soviet control following the partition of Poland in 1939 was far greater than 300,000 (page 63), and the fact that only 150,000 returned to Poland after the war (page 79) would seem to call for comment. Moreover, it is ludicrous to talk of these deportees, or some of them, having "sought refuge" in the USSR. To the authors, however, the Russians are in a class by themselves, and their atrocities belong to a moral universe different from that of the Germans. Lastly one would like to see some confirmation of the statement that the Jewish underground "succeeded in directing a stream of 300,000 Jews across Europe and in transporting well over 100,000 to Palestine" (page 171). The figure seems remarkably high. A book which purports to give the inside story of the great exodus—there are copious references to former underground organizers who are thanked for their cooperation—ought not to place such strains on the credulity of the reader.

As a "serial," the work rates a little higher. The authors clearly have had access to a certain amount of inside information about persons and places, and where their style does not run away with them they manage to give a fairly convincing picture of how the underground worked. For those who did not know about it, there is also some revealing information about the backstairs maneuvering which accompanied the respective efforts of British and German intelligence agents to ingratiate themselves with the Arabs by a show of resolve to keep the "illegals" out of Palestine. Since Churchill genuinely favored Zionism, while Hitler—at least before 1939—was determined to force all Jews to leave Europe, the agents frequently found themselves at odds with governmental policies of which they disapproved. But the Gestapo on occasion cooperated in sending illegal transports across the Mediterranean (this was before war had been declared), and after 1945 the Russians and their satellites did the same on a larger scale. Nonetheless the only sustained and disinterested help the Jews received came from democratic leaders and movements: Gaullists and Socialists in France and the Middle East, Jan Masaryk before the Communist take-over in Prague, and American liberalism all along provided effective support at decisive moments, while Fascist and Communist regimes cynically exploited a situation they had helped to create. British Labor is shown to have had no policy at all—a fact which might have emerged earlier than it did had it not been for the exaggerated importance attached to a few individuals such as Laski.

The authors are hazy about the significance of these facts, though more than willing to sound knowledgeable about what went on behind the scenes. Their interest is focused on what is to them the most thrilling aspect of their pulp serial: the ins and outs of organization politics, and the personalities of a few dozen emissaries who flit mysteriously across the scene, bribing ministers, subverting police officers, forging papers, and steering boatloads of refugees through the British blockades. "Ruth," "Moish," and "Dov" are shown pitting their wits against Ernest Bevin and the British navy, and triumphing in the end. It is a success story, though liberally interlarded with critical reflections on the folly of governments and the corruption of mankind. The following passage is a sample of the authors' style: "The leaders of the Mossad therefore repaired themselves to Rumania to try their luck with the redoubtable Anna Pauker and the leaders of the Communist Party who, in fact, decided Government policy. The Chief, Bar-Gilad and Sneh—all veterans now—came to try their luck. It held. It was not always luck freely acquired, but that did not matter. There is not much that you can get in the Balkans without some form of payment. The British thought—not altogether unreasonably—that payment would consist in smuggling Jewish Communists into Palestine. The Bricha agents soon discovered that payment would have to be in material rather than ideological currency: in Bucharest

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the dollar did not share the odium of the Yankee."

And so on. We can only hope that the story of the exodus will one day be told less vulgarly, more accurately, and in better English. There are some good photographs.

English Jewry's Oldest Congregation

THE LAWS AND CHARITIES OF THE SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE JEWS' CONGREGATION OF LONDON. By NEVILLE LASKI. The Chesset Press. 223 pp. 32/6.

Reviewed by DAVID DE SOLA POOL

ANGLO-JEWRY will celebrate the tercentenary of its resettlement in England this year, just about the time when American Jewry will be closing its tricentennial celebration. The Jews were expelled from England in 1290, and Jewish resettlement did not begin officially until around 1655, following negotiations carried out between Menasseh ben Israel and the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell.

English Jewry's oldest congregation, the Shaar Hashamaim in Bevis Marks in London, was established shortly after the Jewish resettlement. In this book Mr. Neville Laski, one of the leaders of the Bevis Marks congregation, supplements, with this story of its laws and charities, other recent valuable publications of that congregation: *Bevis Marks Records,* and *El Libro de Los Acuerdos (The Book of the Agreements) of 1663,* edited by Lionel D. Barnett; *Treasures of a London Temple,* edited by R. D. Barnett; and Albert M. Hyamson's *The Sephardim of England.* There is no Jewish congregation in the United States, with the partial exception of Shearith Israel in New York, that possesses such ancient and picturesque records of its internal administrative life as does Shaar Hashamaim. The early story of the oldest American Jewish communities, such as those of Newport, Savannah, Philadelphia, or Charleston, seems by contrast to have an essentially modern character.

The New York congregation of Shearith Israel was from its beginning never exclusively Sephardi in character; on the contrary, it welcomed all Jews who came to the city. The London congregation has been far more rigid, though both congregations have been equally undeviating in their adherence to the Sephardi *minhag.* The strict line drawn of old between Sephardim and Ashkenazim in London strikes us at once in the first order of business on the agenda of the *Mahamad* (governing officers) of which we have a record. This was consideration of "the petition of our poor, as well natives as foreigners." Yet except in case of dire need or for other urgent reasons, no man married to a Tudesco (Ashkenazi) woman, nor a married woman or widow of Tudesco origin, was admitted to the congregation's charity rolls.

The London congregation carried over from the parent congregation in Amsterdam its characteristic Sephardi administrative regulations. How the *Mahamad,* the *Velhos* (elders), and the *Yehidim* (members) have conducted the affairs of the congregation since 1663, and what charities were established, are faithfully set forth by Mr. Laski in all their vividness and detail.

Matters of synagogue decorum, priorities in the synagogue, the status of the *haham* and the *hazan,* allotment of seats, the control of kosher meat, charity for Terra Santa, support of the poor, care of all who had died, the promotion of Hebrew learning, the rescue of cap-

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tives, the problems of proselytization, intermarriage, and apostasy—all these and other varied aspects of individual and congregational life were subject to the stern control of the synagogue authorities. How all-controlling was their power can be illustrated by the fact that literature of Hebrew or Ladino origin could be printed by a member of the congregation only after leave was expressly given by the *Mahamad,* the penalty for violation being *herem* (excommunication).

A clear and detailed exposition is given of the numerous trust funds administered by the London congregation for various types of beneficiaries, including dowries for brides and aid for poor lying-in women. A description is also given of the historic almshouses and schools maintained from bequests left to the congregation.

All this and much more is to be found in this fascinating piece of historical writing. It should be added that the glossary at the end of the book makes its reading intelligible to Ashkenazim and Sephardim alike.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

Paul Pickrel is managing editor of the *Yale Review.*

Morris Freedman is an associate editor of Commentary and a frequent contributor to its pages.

Pearl Kazin has reviewed fiction in Commentary and other publications.

Manfred Wolfson is on the research staff of the University of California. He was Chief Research Analyst with the Office of Chief Counsel for War Crimes at Nuremberg.

George Lichtheim, a frequent contributor, lives in London and writes on international politics.

David de Sola Pool, descended from a distinguished Sephardic rabbinical family of England, is rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue Shearith Israel in New York City.

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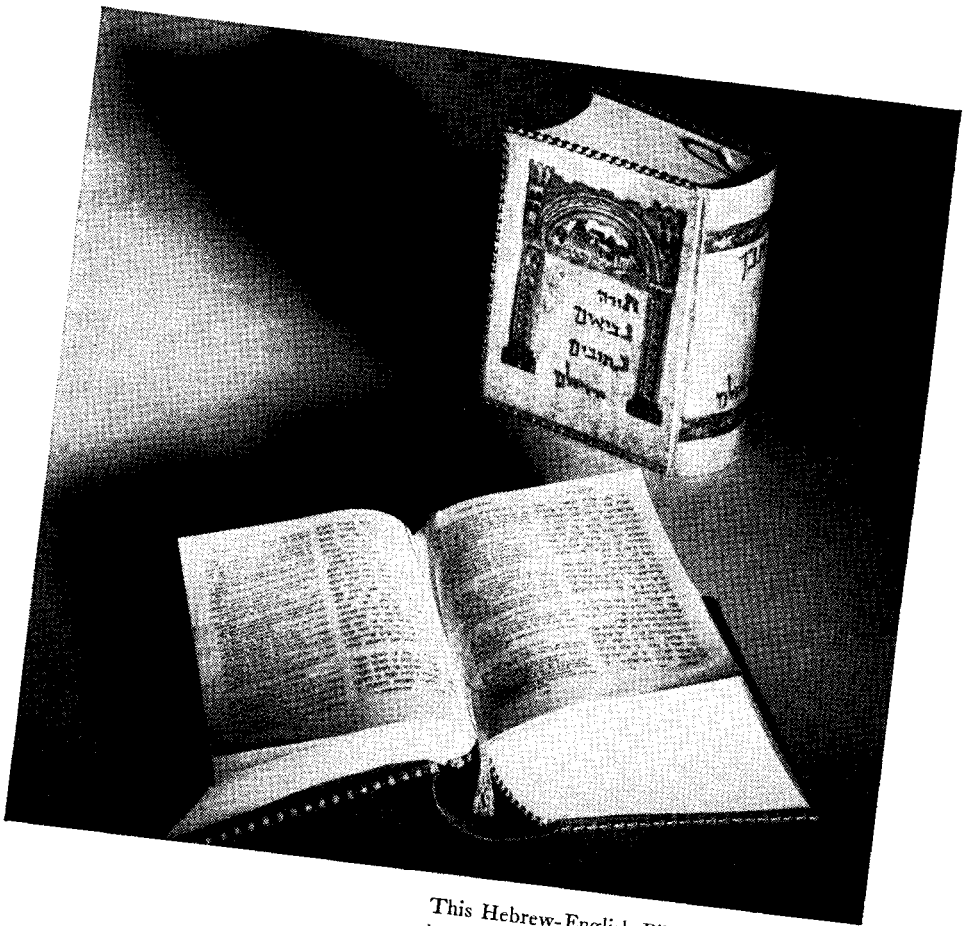

This Hebrew-English Bible is the first ever to be published in the Holy Land (and in Jerusalem). Printed in Jerusalem, Israel . . . 1953.

"Behold, how good and how
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HOLIDAY GREETINGS

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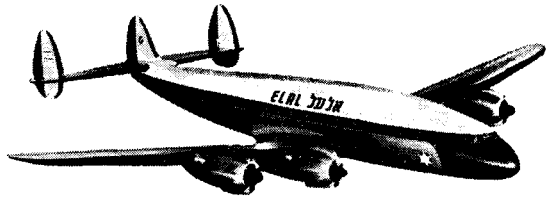

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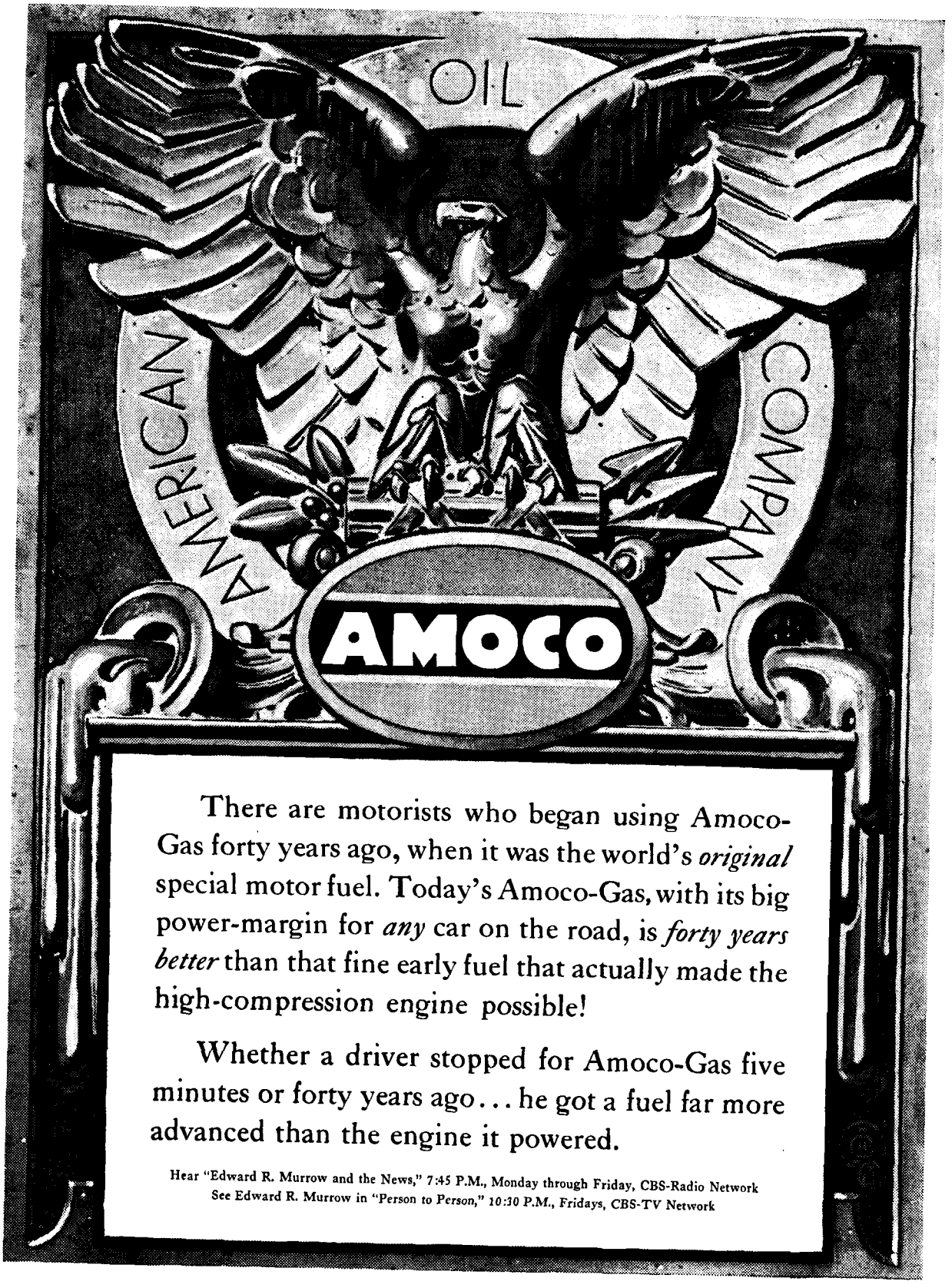

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